GET BACK IN SHAPE

→ Flatten Your Belly!
→ Sculpt Your Arms!
→ Burn Fat Faster!

“HOW I LOST 21 kg”

JUNK FOOD COMES #CLEAN

CREATINE
Build Muscle 2x Faster

WAYS TO REWIND HOLIDAY EXCESS!

BE THE MAN YOUR DOG THINKS YOU ARE!
Modern Essentials
selected by
DAVID BECKHAM
AVERAGE ULTIMATE

USAIN BOLT // IGNITE ULTIMATE
FOR SHORTER DISTANCES:
KEEPING YOUR 5KM FOREVER FASTER.
02.16

Get Back in Shape in 2016!
The motivation and the plan you need to torch fat and start rebuilding the body you want PAGES 51 + 55 + 58

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How to spend your free time this year.

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We’ve got your number, pal.

Subscribe and receive a copy of The Men’s Health Big Muscle Training Manual valued at R170 pages 82

PHOTOGRAPHS SEAN LAURENZ (MAIN PIC), TRUNK ARCHIVE, NIKKI ANDREW, JOBE LAWRENSON

ON THE COVER
Cover Guy Brett Roux
and his dog D’Artagnan
Photograph Sean Laurenz

February 2016 | MH.CO.ZA
Run with the Big Dogs
This is your year to move from pack dog to alpha male. Here’s our pick of online stories to get you there

Choose the Right Dog
When it comes to pets, one size does not fit all. Whether you’re looking for a plucky companion or a furry pal to tear up the running trails with, find your perfect match
mh.co.za/how-to/downtime/choose-the-right-dog

Your Creatine Buying Guide
Creatine is fuel for explosive, high-intensity exercise. Read all about it in this issue – then remember these three things when you buy your next batch
mh.co.za/health/your-creatine-buying-guide

The Science of Responsive Touch
Good sex isn’t all about instinct... sometimes it requires you to be a bit more cerebral. Master the science of responsive touch and take your love life to new levels
mh.co.za/sex-women/haptics

The Best Pre-Workout Meal
To get the most out of your year, you’re going to need the right food. Check out our handy list for perfect protein-and-carb combos
mh.co.za/food/best-foods-for-men/the-best-pre-workout-meal
Crafted for New Heights

This new iconic writing instrument expresses Montblanc’s fine writing culture in the distinctive design language of Marc Newson. The black precious resin and its minimalist understatement disguise some intriguing details. The unique magnetic closing mechanism automatically aligns the cap with the Montblanc emblem on the perfectly flat “plateau”. In the launch edition, the Au585 gold nib bears the designer’s initials.

Visit Montblanc.com
AN ICON JUST GOT LARGER

THE NAVITIMER 46 mm
WHEN MY PHONE BUZZED AT THE STROKE OF 5PM, I KNEW the time for intervention had come:

“If you leave work now, we can do the mountain walk with the hound...”

My wife was reminding me to stick to my promise of keeping things “balanced”.

I was still at my desk, catching up from the day and compiling my to-do list for the week and could have worked on till 7pm. In summer, it’s just too easy to stay at the office till dark and then take your laptop home anyway. Hands up if that sounds kind of familiar?

I’m not sure if my boss is reading this, but that’s no way to live. There are times to graft and put in the hours, but you shouldn’t need a reminder to leave work on a perfect evening. So I took the hint, switched off and headed for the hills. Of course, within minutes of being on the trail I was in a different world; the dog happily running ahead of us, scent of fynbos and distant din of the city were just small reminders to keep my priorities in check.

You don’t need research to back this stuff up, but in the rush of a new year we often lose track of our resolve and the good intentions we make on holiday.

What the research did tell us, though, was that surrounding yourself with the right kind of influencers will dramatically improve your quality of life. Basically, you are a result of the company you keep. Looking around the MH office, it’s easy to see why this is so true. I’m constantly inspired (and shamed into action!) by the routines of the guys on the team. Calisthenics, CrossFit, Muay Thai, boxing and swimming... when people around you are that motivated and energetic, it’s hard not to fall in line. Feel free to quote any of the studies on page 84 to the boss. You now have scientific evidence to leave the building.

In the past year I have also felt the benefits of my own #fitfam at home. Most notably, getting married and sharing an active life with someone who knows what’s good for me! And getting a dog has challenged – and changed – both of our habits, but I wouldn’t have it any other way.

It’s hard not to want to live up to the best version of yourself when surrounded by a positive team. Now all that’s left for me to do is keep making that 6am gym class.

What’s holding you back?

Jason Brown
EDITOR
@CapeJason

P.S. Remember, you can download Men’s Health on iPad, Mac or PC (mysubs.co.za/mens-health)
You’re on time. The airline isn’t.

SAMSUNG Galaxy Tab S2

Delay time is Tab time.
You’re at the airport, catching a connecting flight. You’ve got gifts for everyone, even a little something for yourself. You negotiate your way through customs. You head to the boarding gate. You made it on time. The airline didn’t. Make the most of your waiting time on the lighter, thinner and smarter all new Samsung Galaxy Tab S2.

Samsung – A way of life.
When you're between the sheets, it's all about quality, not quantity. Grabbing eight hours is irrelevant if your sleep more closely resembles a screaming baby than a log. Issues such as sleep apnoea can cause fitful slumber, but even sound sleepers can wake up feeling groggy if their timing is out. When your alarm clock rips you out of a deep phase you can wake up “sleep drunk” – a state of confusion akin to necking a few too many, according to Stanford University. Thankfully, you can download the SleepCycle app on your smartphone which analyses shut-eye and wakes you up in your lightest phase. Payoff? No pillow talk.
Vibration Platform

The Claim: Doing moves like biceps curls and push-ups on this pulsing machine can help improve your speed and strength.

The Reality: Standing on one of these vibrating contraptions will feel like trying to exercise during a mini-earthquake; the base oscillates, forcing your body to work harder to maintain balance, explains conditioning coach David Jack. “The platform’s power may seem subtle at first, but it moves at 20 to 50 oscillations per second, so your muscles are firing at a much faster rate,” he says.

The Benefits: In a Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research study, people who stood on a platform vibrating at 50 hertz performed 22% more reps of an upper-body exercise – and completed those reps at a faster rate – than people who didn’t use the vibration feature. But beginners are lucky if they can stand there for 30 seconds without tiring. Only after you’ve built some basic stabilising strength will you be ready to move on to squats, planks and push-ups. Hands off if you’ve had a recent concussion or back or knee injury, says Jack. The oscillations may cause vertigo and overexert strained muscles.

I sometimes get painful blisters during long runs. What’s the best way to speed up the healing process?

AUBREY, SOWETO

DIY surgery, stat! Draining a blister by puncturing it with a needle is still the best and fastest way to help it heal, says Dr Robert Eckles, dean of clinical studies at the New York College of Podiatric Medicine. But before you prick yourself, make sure it’s not a blood blister. If you see red, or if you have diabetes (which can delay wound healing), let your doctor handle the operation. All clear? Douse a cotton ball with 70% isopropyl alcohol and swab the irritated area. Then use more isopropyl alcohol to disinfect a sewing needle. (Don’t put needle point to flame. Carbon particles could cause further infection or even tattoo you.) Now puncture the bubble and gently drain the blister into the cotton ball, leaving the excess skin there to protect the underlying tissue, says Eckles. During the day, cover the wound with a non-stick bandage; at night, remove the bandage so the area can dry out. To avoid blisters on your next run, reduce friction by wearing two pairs of thin running socks made of synthetic fibres – cotton isn’t as effective at wicking away moisture.

Are standing desks really worth all the hassle?

SAMA, PRETORIA

They may look like some harebrained invention flogged on Gumtree, but just standing for 90 minutes extra a day significantly lowers your blood sugar. And while being sedentary shortens your life, you don’t need to be on your feet all day; in fact, it would probably put strain on your knees. Opt for a model that allows standing and sitting, such as the Original DeskStand (R1 695, deskstand.co.za), so you can keep a lower profile when you need to. “Build up gradually,” says Professor John Buckley, a rehab expert at the University of Chester. “Begin splitting 30 minutes over a day, then add 30 each week.” If facilities stonewall you, try pitching how the health benefits will improve your work to convince the suits.

Are standing desks really worth all the hassle?

CYNTHIA, CLINTON

It’s a trend now, so it goes by many names; the Mediterranean diet and the Blue Zones diet are just two. The idea is to steer clear of foods containing added sugars and trans fats, two inflammation inducers that can bring on spikes in blood sugar and triglycerides. The resulting increase in free radicals can damage your DNA and blood vessels, says Dr James O’Keefe, head of preventive cardiology at St Luke’s Mid America Heart Institute in Kansas City, Missouri. In addition to making you feel tired and achy, free radicals can raise your risk of heart disease, osteoporosis, diabetes and dementia. But just as important is what the diet says you should eat: foods that contain protective phytonutrients and disease-fighting antioxidants. Think fresh fruit and vegetables, extra-virgin olive oil, nuts and even red wine. In a 2015 Nutrition Journal study, men with high blood concentrations of HS-CRP, an inflammation marker, saw a 27% reduction after following this approach for four weeks.

Is white rice really so much worse than brown?

RICHARD, STELLENBOSCH

Yes but no. Brown rice boasts vitamins and minerals but also has higher levels of arsenic. What’s more, “It reduces the digestibility of protein,” says nutritionist Alex Ferentinos – meaning your meat and two sides may not be as effective a muscle-builder as you think. And while black rice is lower in arsenic and packs more antioxidants, it’s actually the white stuff that wins out when you’re hitting the gym. “Whey protein powder is processed too and it’s still good for you,” says Ferentinos. Use our table to compare the three:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PER CUP</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GRAVY</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROTEIN</td>
<td>35G</td>
<td>6G</td>
<td>16G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARBS</td>
<td>30MIN</td>
<td>30MIN</td>
<td>10MIN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I’ve recently lost all drive at work. Is this what they call burnout?

GREG, SANDTON

Like the phrase nervous breakdown, burnout is not always recognised by medics and, as such, it’s often overlooked. But while the symptoms – ennui, cynicism, fatigue – won’t damage you physically, their side effects can. Drink or smoke more and relax less and you’re at greater risk of a heart attack or stroke. Burnout will affect your earning potential, too; scientists from the University of Cologne found that despondency in the workplace has a negative effect on your income. But a professional Factory Reset is within reach. While no time invested in your mental wellbeing is ever a waste, it’s essential that you get to the root of the issue. A study by the University of Zaragoza in Spain listed different types of the problem: frenetic burnout was identified as exhaustion from work overload, whereas worn-out burnout comes from demotivation after excess stress. Once you’ve pinpointed the reason, speak to your manager. A change in your workload could transform your office outlook for the better.
Stop a Stroke Before It Strikes

A stroke could change your life (or end it) in an instant. But the damage that leads to a brain attack is often years in the making. That’s why David Liebeskind, a professor of neurology at UCLA, uses MRIs and CT scans to detect narrowed arteries and other early warning signs. Even dental X-rays, which show arteries to the brain, can hold clues. “Imaging shows changes over time,” he says. His prescription? Ask your dentist and doctor for copies of every imaging study you’ve ever had and stash them on a HIPAA-compliant site, like MyVault. That way, your doc can compare your past results to now.

1. Make Joe Your Bodyguard

“The antioxidants found in coffee have multiple health benefits, and research suggests that drinking three to four cups a day may significantly lower your stroke risk. I make a cup of Nescafé instant every morning. Then I drink two large cups of regular, brewed coffee during the day.”

2. Strategise to Travel Light

“Business trips are mentally taxing. I always pick up a bottle of water to stay hydrated and usually grab a snack like peanuts or cashews at the airport. The H2O, along with the essential fatty acids in the nuts, helps my brain stay energised. Nuts are rich in nutrients that aid bloodflow.”

3. Carve for Your Cardio Health

“I have a Skier’s Edge machine that I use for 30 minutes a day. Aside from making me a strong skier, it provides an intense yet low-impact form of exercise. People who do cardio regularly have higher levels of brain-derived neurotrophic factor, a chemical that plays a big role in your cognitive function.”

4. Change Your Scenery

“When I’m stressed out, I think, ‘What can I control, and what is out of my control?’ One way to gain perspective is to just change your environment: take a walk outside. If I have to work during my free time, I do it quickly and then jump back to leisure. That way, I don’t worry about unfinished business.”

Shift Your Lift
Demand more from your deadlifts by using a staggered stance for half your sets. By putting one leg behind you, you’ll be able to work your front leg and hip harder without sacrificing too much stability. This also helps you strengthen any imbalances between sides.

Watch Your Tongue
When you finish brushing your teeth, stick out your tongue and look in the mirror. Changes in its color and texture can presage a variety of problems. An unusually glossy surface, for instance, could signal an iron or vitamin B12 deficiency. Bring any concerns to your dentist.

Back Off the Energy Elixir
Careful what you wish for: in a Swiss study, men who drank an energy drink and did a mentally stressful task saw systolic and diastolic blood pressure spikes that were six and three points higher, respectively, than those of water drinkers. The jump could lead to heart problems.

BJ Gaddour, CEO of StreamFIT.com; author of Your Body Is Your Barbell (Rodale, 2014); creator, Men’s Health DeltaFIT Speed Shred

Dr Mark S. Wolff, professor and chair, department of cardiology and comprehensive care, New York University College of Dentistry

Dr Prediman Krishan Shah, professor of medicine and cardiology, Cedars-Sinai Medical Centre, Los Angeles
Brain Freeze, Explained

Dr Jorge Serrador, a cerebral bloodflow researcher, explains how speed-eating ice-cream hurts your head

1/ A Freeze Alert Sounds in Your Mouth
As you wolf down rocky road, the frozen goodness cools your pie-a-la-mode-hole. This temperature drop stimulates your trigeminal nerve, which runs throughout the roof of your mouth and helps regulate the amount of blood flowing through your brain.

2/ Your Brain Gets Confused
Your trigeminal nerve sends a “Dilate!” command to your anterior cerebral artery. This results in a warm rush of blood to your frontal lobe, your brain’s decision-making HQ. Your brain perceives this as a signal that it’s being threatened with frost damage.

3/ Pleasure Gives Way to Pressure
About 20% more blood is pumping through your anterior artery to your frontal lobe. The sudden surge causes surrounding tissue to swell, which squishes brain cells against the inside of your skull and activates pain receptors all across your forehead.

4/ You Want to Scream
As you grimace mid-gorge, the pain signals override the trigeminal nerve’s earlier command and instruct your anterior cerebral artery to constrict, restricting bloodflow. Because the extra blood needs 30 seconds to a minute to drain, your pain lingers.

5/ The Pain Finally Melts Away
Ah, sweet relief. You dig in again. Oh, you haven’t learned your lesson? Trick your trigeminal nerve by pressing the underside of your tongue to the roof of your mouth between bites. This will warm the nerve and tell it to ease up on the overreaction.
YOUR ULTIMATE WEIGHT LOSS MANUAL

Men's Health
BELLY OFF GUIDE
2016

WHOA!
Drop 5kg in 5 Weeks!

STRIP AWAY FAT!
GET BACK IN SHAPE - FOR GOOD

GOODBYE GUT!
14 FAST & SIMPLE WORKOUTS

THE NEW SUPERFOODS
17 WAYS TO EAT MORE, WEIGH LESS

6-PACK SECRETS
HOW THIS READER LOST 35KG

ONLY R55 ON SALE NOW!
CURL UP TO SLEEP

Exercise your right to a restful night. Different workouts affect your sleep patterns and quality differently, say researchers at Appalachian State University in North Carolina. They found that aerobic workouts earlier in the day may help you nod off faster, while weight training later in the day may help you stay asleep. Can’t swing that timing? No worries: any physical activity will improve shuteye quality. “Exercise boosts your immune system and can clear the stress hormones from your body,” says study author Dr Scott Collier.
Feed Her Libido
Order appetisers; skip the entrée. Women may be more responsive to romance when they’re slightly full, according to research from Drexel University and the University of Pennsylvania. Scans of women’s brains showed that the regions associated with motivation, reward and romance responded more to intimacy cues after the women drank a 2 000-kilojoule shake than when they were hungry. “Feeling stuffed doesn’t make people feel sexy,” says study author Dr Alice Ely. “This state of being sated without physical discomfort may be a sweet spot.” So take her out for tapas; then head to your place and skip right to dessert.

TAME YOUR TIGER
Stressing about premature ejaculation? Oh, come now. A Valparaiso University study suggests men with PE can be hard on themselves, which makes the problem worse. The causes of PE are not well understood, and the lack of info can be frustrating. Talking about your anxiety helps, the study authors say; partners see this as a sign of courage.

The Height Report
New research supports the theory that women prefer taller guys – the greater the stature, the more sexual partners men had*. For up-to-the-minute sex news and tips, go to mh.co.za/sex-women
DAVID BECKHAM
BEYOND
THE NEW FRAGRANCE
IT ALL STARTS WITH A DREAM
New Science of Swoll

Bodybuilders are notorious for using extreme methods to get ripped. However, emerging research shows that not all traditional bodybuilding principles hold up to scientific scrutiny. “The average guy who just wants to get bigger and more defined doesn’t have to be so meticulous,” says Dr Brad Schoenfeld, an exercise scientist at Lehman College in New York. So ditch your old bro-wisdom for these cutting-edge strength principles.

1/2

MAX WEEKLY WEIGHT LOSS (IN KILOS) THAT PROMOTES FAT LOSS AND ENSURES MUSCLE RETENTION

Source: Journal of the International Society of Sports Science

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OLD SCHOOL</th>
<th>NEW RULE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The muscle-growth zone is 8 to 12 reps.</td>
<td>Mix it up! A combo of low (3 to 5), medium (6 to 14), and high (15+) reps is most effective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hitting each body part hard once a week yields best results.</td>
<td>Working your muscles at least three times a week leads to greater size gains.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every set should be performed to failure.</td>
<td>Leaving 1 rep in the tank for most sets builds you up and prevents overtraining.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing cardio on an empty stomach burns more fat.</td>
<td>You burn equal fat whether you’re fasted or fed, so fit in your cardio when you can.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To get ripped, you must eat six or more small meals a day.</td>
<td>Whether you eat three squares or six, be sure to nail your protein and kilojoule goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Load up on every muscle-building supplement.</td>
<td>Caffeine, beta-alanine and creatine monohydrate are your best bets for muscle growth.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One Thing Arnold Did Right

No, not the steroids. We mean the Arnold Press, a shoulder press variation credited with giving him the hulking, chiseled shoulders that helped him win seven Mr Olympia titles. The move was developed to boost muscle activation in all three “heads” - front, middle and back - of your deltoids. The next time you train it, do it in place of your usual shoulder exercise.

Stand holding a pair of dumbbells in front of your shoulders, your palms facing your body and your elbows in tight to your sides. Brace your core (imagine you’re about to take a punch to the gut) and slightly squeeze your glutes.

Push the dumbbells straight overhead while slowly rotating your palms. At the top, your arms should be completely straight and your palms facing forward. Pause, and then slowly rotate the dumbbells back to the starting position.
GET THE RESULTS YOU WANT THIS NEW YEAR WITH SA’s BEST SELLING WEIGHT LOSS CAPSULE

8.3 kg
AND 13.6% BODY FAT

Chris Coetzee

THE ALL-IN-ONE WEIGHT LOSS CAPSULE
FORMULATED WITH THE MOST EFFECTIVE & CLINICALLY PROVEN INGREDIENTS TO DELIVER OPTIMAL RESULTS.

*SPECIAL OFFER* 20% OFF

FACE THE FAT CHALLENGE
SET YOUR GOAL & WIN
WWW.FACETHEFAT.CO.ZA
Lose Your Breadbasket

No loafing in the weightloss battle! According to a Spanish study review, white bread can give you a gut even if you eat a sensible Mediterranean diet. White-bread eaters added 1.3cm more to their waist, and nearly a kilogram more bodyweight, than people who ate little or no white bread, the review concluded. Both groups’ diets included plenty of olive oil, beans, produce and fish. Still crave your daily bread? Go whole-grain: it had no effect on weight gain. That’s because the added fibre gives your slice a better glycemic index, explains study author Professor Lluis Serra Majem.

See Your GP, Drop the KG

Losers can’t be choosers: you may shed more weight if your diet is prescribed by a doctor, say Brown University scientists. People assigned to a three-month online interactive diet program lost 4kg more than those who were asked to read a weekly weight-loss newsletter. Having a doc’s input provides accountability and spurs you to make more behavioural changes.

Heavy Traffic Ahead

Ditch the drive: in a UK study, folks who started walking, biking or taking public transportation to work lowered their BMI and lost up to 7kg in two years.

BMI change if you switch from...  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Car to Public Transit</th>
<th>Car to Active Travel</th>
<th>Active Travel to Driving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>-0.45</td>
<td>+0.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health

Extra Kilograms Lost in a Year by Men Who Stepped on a Scale Daily, vs. Those Who Never Weighed Themselves

Source: Journal of Obesity
The Beat in Diabetes

Don’t be among the quick and the dead. Having a fast resting heart rate may raise your risk of diabetes, research in the International Journal of Epidemiology suggests. People who clocked in at 88 beats per minute had a 73% higher diabetes risk than those with slower tickers. A speedier resting heart rate signals increased sympathetic nervous system activity, which can mess with insulin regulation. Other studies show that eight weeks of high-intensity interval training can lower a high resting heart rate by 13%.

PERCENTAGE OF MEN WHO (INCORRECTLY) BELIEVE THEY CAN TRAIN THEMSELVES TO NEED LESS SLEEP
Source: The Better Sleep Council

Career Killers
Work stress can leave you disgruntled and deceased, a UK study found. Don’t die at your desk: see a doc for advice on reducing stress.

Increased Risk from Job Strain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coronary heart disease</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ischemic stroke</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 2 diabetes</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPD</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Current Cardiology Reports

“SIRI, AM I DEPRESSED?”
It’s the new mood ring: your phone could tell you if you’re clinically blue, a study from Northwestern University reveals. The more time people spent using their phone, the greater their odds of depression. They may be relying on the device as a way to withdraw, the scientists say. Find a therapist at therapistdirectory.co.za

WINDSHIELD WASHER FLUID
Clean glass could endanger your ass. Arizona State researchers who sampled washer fluid reservoirs found high levels of Legionella, bacteria that can cause a serious form of pneumonia. The vapour from tainted fluid could enter your car’s air vents, then your lungs. Use a solution with methanol; it has antibacterial properties.
Eat the Heat, Beat the Reaper

A little fire in your belly is good for you: according to researchers in China, eating spicy foods may help you live longer. People who reported eating hot stuff three or more days a week were 14% less likely to die in the next seven years, the study found. The possible reason: capsaicin, the key source of the peppers’ heat, may help regulate cardiovascular function and metabolism, protecting against heart disease and diabetes.

Burn After Reading

Turn up the heat and help your health by dousing your dinner with this capsaicin-packed hot sauce from chef and restaurant owner Troy Guard. Serve on tacos, scrambled eggs or chilli con carne.

COLLECT THESE
2 CUPS WATER + 1 CUP WHITE VINEGAR + 10 JALAPEÑOS, DICED + 1 PEELED GARLIC CLOVE + ½ TSP KOSHER SALT

DO THIS
1. Combine all the ingredients in a medium pot and boil for 5 minutes.
2. Remove from heat, allow to cool, pour into a blender, and buzz until smooth.
3. Strain through cheesecloth or a fine-mesh sieve into a lidded vessel.

TWEAK IT
Desire more fire? Fan the flames by adding 1 or 2 habanero peppers.

PERCENTAGE DROP IN THE ODDS OF LARYNGEAL CANCER AMONG FOLKS WHO CONSUMED THE MOST LYCOPENE – SO EAT MORE TOMATOES AND GRAPEFRUIT

Source: Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention
FALL IN LOVE SO DEEP
YOU’LL SEE DOUBLE

GO BIG WITH 2 DEALS FOR 1 CONTRACT

GET 2
HUAWEI Y560 HANDSETS
ON 1 CONTRACT
FOR ONLY

R149
PMx24 on My MTNChoice 50

FREE SIM AND CONNECTION
50 ANYTIME MINUTES | 100 SMSs | 300MB DATA

TOP FEATURES
4.5" Screen
5MP Rear and 2MP Front Camera
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Upgrade Your Playlist

You know what they say: find what you love, and let it kill you. Well, DJ Black Coffee’s not dead yet

BY KIERAN LEGG

IT’S A STRANGE FEELING BEING THE NEW kid on the block when you’re on the cusp of turning 40. But Nkosinathi Maphumulo, better known as house mastermind Black Coffee, isn’t feeling any first-day jitters.

Soon after being named 2015’s Breakthrough DJ of the Year at the Ibiza Awards, he’s poised to drop his new album internationally. This is the moment he has spent over two decades working towards. There’s pressure to adapt, to mould a new sound for a bigger international audience, but for him reinvention isn’t something to be feared - it’s just another piece of the puzzle.

“You know, I can’t stick to what I’ve been doing for the last 20 years,” he says. “What works here in South Africa is just not going to bring in the same crowds in New York or London. But I want to keep some of the soul, the heart of my old tracks. It’s a big challenge, but I’m ready for it.”
He believes he’s already scaled one of the biggest obstacles after putting together his new album, *Pieces of Me*. Intended to burst the bubble which has limited his fame to Africa’s neon-lit clubs, smoky lounges and dust-filled outdoor venues, the production of the album was scattered between gigs, the minimalist soul-laced electro fuelled by sleepless jet-lagged nights in lonely hotel rooms.

There was no studio time, just a musician and his laptop, a throwback to the trackpad production that led to the completion of his first album, 10 years ago. The refinement and vocals came later, when he finally had a chance to spend some time in the booth. When he released the disc in September, it shot straight to the top of South African iTunes bestseller lists. And with a lot hinging on his latest work’s success, Nkosinathi says this litmus test on local shores bodes well for this year’s international release.

“I think it’s going to do well. I’ve stripped it down, made it more minimal – but the soul is still there, playing around the edges,” he says. He’s not anxious, nervous or stressed. This is what he was born to do.

Nkosinathi’s story begins in Durban, his birthplace, and the city he would return to, to study jazz at Natal Tech. This was a strategic move, a way to broaden his musical tastes, expand his knowledge and immerse himself in the theory of the genre.

His time on campus would leave a distinctive footprint on his style, a unique brand of house music accented with licks of jazz and soul. However, impatient to get started, he abandoned his studies before completing his degree, choosing to pursue his music career as a backup singer for Madala Kunene, locally known as the king of *maskanda*.

His first big break would have to wait until 2003 where he was selected as one of just two SA musicians to enter the fold of the Red Bull Music Academy. The workshop, founded to cultivate musical talent from across the globe, was an important step towards introducing Black Coffee to the world.

In that same year he was featured alongside internationally well-known producers on the *DJs at Work* compilation – and just a short two years later he had released his self-titled first album and started Soulistic.

“I WAKE UP EVERY DAY EXCITED FOR WHAT’S AHEAD... ONCE YOU’RE CHASING THE DREAM, IT’S THE BEST PLACE TO BE”
Music, a record-label-slash-corporate-structure that has kept him in control of his vision. The album was warmly received by SA’s house-obsessed radio listeners. Nkosinathi’s insistence on incorporating real instruments added a layer of authenticity to his electronic tracks and struck just the right chord with fans. “South Africa is unique in that way,” he says.

“We don’t have scenes. House music is just a part of the culture. It’s on the radio, but it’s not radio-EDM, it’s just the radio. It’s music that everyone has danced to at some point in their lives.”

Despite becoming a household name locally, Black Coffee struggled to find a fan base overseas. Whereas a gig in Cape Town or Joburg could attract an audience just as diverse as his musical influences, the world, it seemed, was not ready for his work. It was only during last year’s global tour, stopping off in cities such as Montreal, LA, Miami, Paris and Tokyo that it all began to click for the DJ.

“When I play in South Africa, the crowd is there for Black Coffee. But if I’m in New York I have to read the room, I have to ask myself which Black Coffee have they come to see? Are they an EDM crowd, or do they want to hear my older tracks? You know, I have to adapt every time.”

This constant reinvention and adjustment has kept him on his toes, and it explains the refreshing approach he took to his new album, which was crafted in the midst of last year’s chaotic calendar. It’s brought a confidence to his music, a certainty that shows he understands what it takes to live up to the name of Breakthrough DJ of the Year and that his age isn’t standing in the way.

“Right now, where I am, it is the most special place to be,” he says. “This is why I tell people, it’s important to find that thing that you love and you will never have to work again in your life.”

Nkosinathi is a busy man, when he’s not gigging, he’s managing his company or laying down the groundwork for a new track. Is he sure it doesn’t feel like work? He laughs. “It’s not easy, but I wake up every day excited for what is ahead of me. I think anyone can find this, if you look into yourself – even as you grow older – and you can find that calling. Once you’re chasing the dream, it’s the best place to be.”

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**Road Trip**

Heading off at dawn? You need something to sing along to. Don’t be scared to break out those cheesy 80s hits – everyone still knows the words to Journey’s “Don’t Stop Believing”.

**House Party**

You’ve got your fave EDM bangers, but it’s important to read the room, says Black Coffee. Find out what music your guests are into and strike a balance between their tastes and your own.

**Cardio**

Elite long-distance runners manage to hit around 180 strides per minute – that’s 90 per leg. The Run Tempo app (iOS, Android) will help you create a playlist to suit your bpm goals.

**Bedroom**

A study commissioned by Spotify found that a background tune is 40% more likely to turn on your partner than touching. Be subtle – think James Bay, not James Blunt.

**Rush Hour**

A recent study found that listening to music can reduce your psychological stress response. Traffic is perfect for indulging in those tracks you’d rather not rock in front of your mates.
Give Tequila Another Shot

Five new ways to fall in love with blue agave juice

BY JOHN MCCARTHY

1 / Blend It with Grapefruit
Margaritas are fantastic, but in Mexico the paloma, a tequila-based cocktail with grapefruit juice, reigns supreme. Go with a reposado tequila (a tequila that’s been aged in oak barrels for longer than two months, but less than a year, and is a lot smoother) then follow the recipe on this page, courtesy of Angela Weickl from El Burro in Cape Town.

2 / Drink It with Sushi
Instead of sake or white wine, opt for blanco (white, unaged) tequila, served neat. “It pairs beautifully with oily fish like tuna and salmon,” says Ken Arnone, a certified master chef and the owner of KA-CMC, a culinary consulting company in New York.

3 / Make a Boozy Syrup
Mix 1 cup sugar, ¼ cup triple sec and ½ cup each of water and tequila. Bring to a boil, stir for a minute and let cool. Drizzle it over berries for an awesome dessert, says Aarón Sánchez, co-owner of Johnny Sánchez in New Orleans.

4 / Swap It Out for Whisky
The barrel flavours in añejo – tequila aged for one to three years – make it great either neat or with ice, says Mike Morales, CEO of Tequila Aficionado Media. Better yet, use it to replace bourbon in your next Manhattan or Old-Fashioned.

5 / Brew a Fiery Infusion
Combine a fifth of blanco with the pith and seeds of three or four medium jalapeños; wait 10 to 20 minutes. Taste for heat, strain the liquor back into the bottle, and use it to spice cocktails, says Philip Ward of Mayahuel in Manhattan.

WHAT YOU’LL NEED

- 100ML FRESHLY SQUEEZED GRAPEFRUIT JUICE
- 1½ SHOTS OF REPOSADO TEQUILA
- ½ SHOT OF AGAVE SYRUP
- 200ML SODA WATER

Combine the grapefruit juice, tequila and agave syrup together in a cocktail shaker; fill the shaker glass with ice. Shake well and pour into a tall cocktail glass and charge with soda water. Garnish the glass with a quarter slice of fresh grapefruit and serve with a straw.
Pocket This
Those sacks in your pants deserve to carry only the finest and most essential man gear

LED LENSER K1 TORCH
We might be load-shedding free but in case you fall victim to a power cut, this tiny torch will help your find your way. At just 44mm, it’s also a keyring. R85 Cape Union Mart

ZIPPO BRASS LIGHTER
This isn’t your average lighter – it’s a conversation starter, thanks to its golden brass case. It’ll earn you compliments (or envy) as you spark the fire at a braai or campsite or wave your hands in the air during a concert. R496 zippo.co.za

BURGUNDY COLLECTIVE CARD HOLDER
This slim leather accessory has slots for four cards and also a main compartment for your stack of Randelas. It won’t bulge in your pockets and the brown leather ages gracefully with use. R350 burgundy-collective.com

WOODEN POCKET COMB
Don’t get caught looking like you just rolled out of bed (although that is the look of choice for many). This compact comb also doubles up as a beard comb. Just moisturise and groom. R59 Essentiallynatural.co.za

KERSHAW 3120 GEMSBOK SAFARI KNIFE
For adventurous days (or laidback biltong chowing), you’ll need some weaponry to get you through. This flip-open single-blade knife perfect for everyday use, even for the most squeamish of hands. R650 Cape Union Mart

IPHONE 6S PLUS
With its 5.5-inch 3D touch screen, which senses how much pressure you are applying to the display, this device gives you real, tangible control over the apps that keep you connected to your family, friends and followers. Throw in a tough aluminium casing with a fingerprint-resistant coating and you’ve got a phone that can play just as hard as you can. R13 599 (16GB) iStore

HOW TO Choose the Perfect Pen
Another manly pocket essential is a quality fountain pen. Hilary Adams, a professional calligrapher and owner of her own company Signature Ink in Cape Town, tells you what to look for when buying your next one

Your Grip
How you hold a pen depends on the size of your fingers and hands. A slim, narrow pen probably isn’t ideal if you have big hands. Choose a pen that’s suited for your hand size and doesn’t need a tight grip – a relaxed grip ensures a flowing handwriting style and the ability to write for long periods without getting tired.

The Nib
The most common is the round-tipped nib and its size determines how readable your writing becomes. A fine nib offers more detail while a broad nib shows little to no difference in strokes, which is fine for everyday home and office use. A chisel-edged nib is best for italic and stylised writing, so it’s perfect for invitations, cards and special documents.

The Ink
With fountain pens, you can either use cartridges or a converter, which allows you to fill the pen from bottled ink. Luxe pen makers offer a wide range of both, but make sure you always use ink specially formulated for fountain pens.

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NISSAN QASHQAI

THE ULTIMATE URBAN EXPERIENCE FROM R289,900

Master your urban playground in the Nissan Qashqai. With head turning styling and innovative crossover technology such as Around View Monitor®, Chassis Control and NissanConnect®, all seamlessly working together to ensure the ultimate urban experience. It’s time to start your story, so book a test drive at Nissan.co.za and discover what driving should feel like.

Dynamic Design | Innovative Technology | Inspired Performance

*Optional Techno Pack on Acenta models
Train Like a Girl

We asked the Women’s Health team for 7 fitness lessons. Listen up, guys...

1/ Cardio Won’t Rob You of Your Gains
If you want to be fit, you need to do cardio. But if your feelings about machines are colder than John Connor’s, get your heart rate up with skipping, rowing, mountain climbers or shuttle runs.

2/ Wear Deodorant
Go ahead and skip the pre-workout hair ritual, but consider a quick spritz your debt to society.

3/ Learn to Touch Your Yoes
Flexibility is a hallmark of fitness and stretching helps your muscles grow. Yep, it’s time you tried yoga, bro.

4/ Take a Break from the Heavy Metal
You’re so single-minded about hitting that weight rack, it’s like you were programmed by Mugatu. But training functionally, in multiple planes – hinging, twisting, turning left – makes you stronger and helps prevent injury. Try throwing a medicine ball around or use a resistance band to strengthen your smaller stabiliser muscles.

5/ Remember Your Other Half
You know how Brosnihan always says that “rugby is a game of two halves”? So is your body. Incorporate squats and lunges to avoid the Johnny Bravo physique.

6/ Beef Up Your Shoe Cupboard
So you lift heavy Monday to Friday and hit the road on weekends? One pair of takkies is not going to cut it. Wearing the right shoes for your workout will get you better results and help keep you out of the physio’s office. And if you tackle the odd trail, that’s another pair. See how easy it is to shop?

7/ Eat More Salad
You can sweat buckets, but if you’re not cutting your kilojoule intake, that boep’s going nowhere. Keep hunger at bay by bulk up your plate with fibre-rich greens – that’s lettuce, spinach, beans, kale, green pepper; not avo, olives and feta. Sorry. We know how much you love olives.
Six Ways She’s Judging You

A match.com poll asked about men’s most toxic first-date fails – and women had plenty to share

1/ Phoning It In
Fixating on your phone is a top turnoff for 75% of women, according to the dating site’s annual survey. “She feels like she’s not interesting enough to hold your attention,” says Kristen Mark, director of the Sexual Health Promotion Lab at the University of Kentucky. Simple fix: use airplane mode, Mark suggests.

2/ Yaw Werds
Nearly nine out of 10 women are judgmental about how you speak. Your polish is a glimpse into her future kids. “A well-bred man is likely to have well-bred children,” says Jay Heinrichs, a rhetorician and the author of Thank You for Arguing. “This isn’t just about impressing a date; it’s natural selection.” Use proper English; you don’t want her to, uh, misunderstand your excellent background, Heinrichs says.

3/ Spineless-ness
Fully 84% of women routinely check for signs of confidence. A subtle style gamble can help, says MH fashion editor Azeez Jacobs. A tie or pocket square in a traditionally feminine colour – like pink or purple – will let her know you’re secure with your masculinity. Just avoid anything silky or shiny.

4/ A Foul Mouth
Research links poor dental health with even poorer bank accounts, says Mari-anne LaFrance, a professor of psychology at Yale and the author of Why Smile? That could be why 81% of women fixate on your oral hygiene. So whiten your choppers: invest in a home kit or at least some strips.

5/ Outdated Outfits
Nearly seven out of 10 women look to a man’s clothing for signs of his potential as a suitable mate, the survey revealed. “Before you even open your mouth, your clothes speak for you,” says stylist Jacqui Stafford, author of The Wow Factor. Go with a fine V-neck sweater, a crisp button-down shirt, and tailored darkwash jeans for a look that’s sharp, not stuffy.

6/ “Vintage” Kicks
She’s looking down at you: nearly half the women surveyed said they closely examine your footwear. So skip the worn-out sneakers and upgrade to classic leather oxfords or wingtips, says Jacobs. You want a modern shape, so avoid anything wide, chunky, and square or long and pointy, she advises. Note: Michael Jordan has retired.
Be the Greatest Hit on Karaoke Night

**YOU'RE NOT A ROCK STAR**, but sometimes you gotta act like one. That’s what makes karaoke singing extremely entertaining – or epically embarrassing. It all depends on the length, range and difficulty of your tune. With the help of Keith Houston (a.k.a. Roger Niner), a top karaoke jockey, we’ll teach you to rock steady with certified crowd-pleasers.

**ACT IT OUT**
Pulling off high-energy punk depends on you embodying the lyrics. So act as if it's you who should be sedated by shouting along until it's over. This song is really short – perfect if you can't sing and want to leave the stage fast.

**CONTROL THE ROOM**
For recognisable rock anthems, you can amp up the energy by getting the crowd involved. Just point to the folks in the audience and do some exaggerated claps to egg them on. It's as if you're already being applauded.

**SHOCK AND AWE**
You picked a song by a female pop icon? Then get out there and sell it shamelessly. “Slither and gyrate like there’s no tomorrow,” says Houston. Everyone will be rolling. Encore? Give them a weekend special they’ll never forget.

**NAIL THE CHORUS**
If you use any hip-hop song, remember: the rapping is just a prelude to the catchy, ever-repeating chorus. Practise the payoff part ahead of time. That way you can flub a verse here and there but still look like a baller.

**BRING THE Swagger**
To pull off the King, you’d better be willing to curl your lip and swivel your pelvis in time to the beat. About two minutes in, don’t be scared to drop to one knee and get meta: if you plead with the audience to love you, it’ll happen.

**ACE THE AIR GUITAR**
An epic performance will require great vocal range. If you’re going for a high-octane (and high-octave) song, try to distract the crowd from your deficiencies. Well-timed air guitar moves are sure to keep your fans entertained.
Light ’Em Up

Don’t scoff at the price: today’s projectors are smart, compact and versatile, and will give you the big picture you’re missing on your TV.

When you’re done watching, run the fan for about five minutes to let the unit cool.

SCREEN THE CANDIDATES

Good image quality relies a lot on the viewing surface, says Rob Sabin of Sound & Vision magazine. While a projector will make the most out of any wall, you can upgrade the experience with a 100-inch white screen (R8 000, avc.co.za) to put a cinema in your lounge.

A MAN HAS A RIGHT TO WATCH SUPERSIZED J.J. ABRAMS explosions and Russell Wilson spirals anywhere he likes. But as much as you’d love to see 90-inch LCDs on every wall in your house, we figure that’s not an option. So consider this: a new crop of projectors can bring big-screen viewing to your bedroom, the kitchen or even the back wall of your garage, with less effort than you used to spend setting up your DVD player. We tested the latest to find out which ones pack the best visual punch for the price.

1/ BenQ W1070+

BEST FOR: SMALL ROOMS

To create a big image in a small space, you need a “short throw” lens. This BenQ has it: from a distance of about 2 metres, it delivers a 1080p HD image that’s bright enough to watch with the living room lights on. If you’re a discerning viewer without a screening room, just set this on your coffee table and fire it up. R17 100, webantics.com

2/ LG Smart MiniBeam PW800

BEST FOR: TRAVEL

It’s no bigger than your toiletry bag, and at 0.5kg it may weigh less too. But the mighty MiniBeam beams out a 100-inch image. It also has a tuner for local stations and is 3D-compatible. Take it on your next road trip and use it to blow up those GoPro videos from your holiday. Or just watch a giant documentary. R9 070, comx-computers.co.za

3/ Epson 3600e

BEST FOR: HOME THEATRE

Save on the cost of a 4K projector and consider Epson’s still-totally-gorgeous 1080p resolution. The sharp, dramatic image is partly the result of a dynamic iris that maximises contrast within each scene. Translation: your viewing experience will rock. Plus, the built-in wireless HD transmitter means no cables tether the 3600e to your video source. R25 000, epson.com
Ready to Be a Winner?

You have 150 hours of free time this month. Make sure every minute is award-winning

**Best Thrill**

FMX riders, BMX experts and skaters are set to converge on Cape Town for the 7th Ultimate X Games. Expect high-flying antics as adrenaline junkies compete to win R175 000. Visit ultimatex.co.za 26-27 February

**Best Supporting Act**

Don’t get stuck watching another Notebook knock-off on Valentine’s Day. Zoolander 2 picks up where the last film left off, dressing up Benedict Cumberbatch as a transgender model, and killing off Justin Bieber. 12 February

**BEST NIGHT IN**

The walkers will be sidling back onto our screens after the tense midseason finale of The Walking Dead last year. The show has had its ups-and-downs, but it seems the writers are finally picking up the pace. 14 February

**Best Night Out**

The Cape Town Electronic Music Festival is an excuse to dance like nobody’s watching. Visit ctemf.co.za to score tickets. 5-7 February

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**BEST SCREEN HERO**

Deadpool’s producers have promised the film will stay true to the comics, so expect shootouts, gore and punchlines – a refreshing change from the slew of family-friendly action movies of the past year. 12 February

**BEST TIME-KILLER**

Far Cry Primal puts you in the shoes of a cave-man trying to survive during the Stone Age. You’ll hunt for food, clash with predators and tame your own sabre-toothed tiger. Out on PC, PS4 and Xbox One. 23 February

**Best Water Fix**

A gruelling paddle through the Pietermaritzburg dam of the same name, the Midmar Mile draws thousands of swimmers from across the world. Yes, it’s worth the trip. Visit midmarmile.co.za 13-15 February

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**Big Winners**

The Academy Awards take place on 28 Feb. Here are our picks

**ACTOR:** MATT DAMON, *The Martian*

As a stranded astronaut, Damon gets a chance to actually... well, act.

**ACTRESS:** EMILY BLUNT, *Sicario*

Emily Blunt shines as an FBI agent trying to bring down a Mexican drug cartel.

**PICTURE:** *Spotlight*

This story of the Boston journalists who uncovered abuse by Catholic priests is a roller-coaster.

**DIRECTOR:** CARY FUKUNAGA

The guy behind True Detective keeps up the good work with Beasts of No Nation.

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40 MH.CO.ZA | February 2016
STOP SAYING...

1/ “I’ll revert back to you...” Say what you mean: are you landing a skateboard trick or just planning to respond?

2/ “There aren’t enough boots on the ground...” Wait, you’re not taking on ISIS, are you?

3/ “Let’s wrap our heads around this one.”

4/ “Think outside the box.”

5/ “Let’s touch base...” Doesn’t HR have a policy against this kind of thing? Leave those bases alone.

6/ “We’re on a sticky wicket here.” Not even pro cricketers call a pitch a wicket anymore.

7/ “We’ll need to check the optics on this.” Just... what?

8/ “When it comes down to it, I’m a team player.”

9/ “If I could just add my two cents”, or “It’s the million-dollar question...” In this economy, those numbers don’t mean what you think they mean.

10/ “I trust this finds you well.” What happened to “Hello”?

11/ “At the end of the day...” You’re going home, and so is everyone else.

12/ “This is a paradigm shift for the company.” Don’t be so presumptuous; your new idea is someone else’s old news.

13/ “Right now is when the rubber meets the road...”

14/ “I’ve got an open-door policy.” So that’s where the draft is coming from... you should probably close it.

15/ “That kind of thinking is par for the course.”

16/ Looks like he phoned it in.

17/ “It’s time to address the elephant in the room...” That’s no way to talk about your, er, heavier colleagues.

18/ “You’re throwing me under the bus...” It’s just a slide presentation, stop being so dramatic.

Boredroom Banter

Drop the clichés. These so-last-year phrases aren’t doing you any favours in the office.
Master the ’Gram

Photographer and one of South Africa’s top Instagrammers, Craig Howes, tells you how to impress your followers and earn double-taps

USE EDITING APPS
Don’t be afraid to tweak your pictures and bring out the best in them. Use apps like VSCO and Snapseed for their professional-looking filters. You can also fine-tune your images — straighten them, brighten them, crop and more. Just don’t edit too much or they’ll look fake and over-processed.

HASHTAG THE RIGHT WAY
Use relevant hashtags so that people with similar interests who search for them will find your profile. If they’re in the main caption, it’ll look crowded, so put them in the first comment. I save my sets of hashtags in my Notes app so I can copy and paste them in quickly.

CHOOSE A STYLE
Develop a niche and stick to it. Whether your forte is sneakers, architecture, food, fitness, outfit grids, animals or landscapes, be consistent and give your followers what they’re looking for.

BE CREATIVE
Instagram isn’t only about creating the most technically perfect picture, it’s also about taking interesting pictures. Look for leading lines, interesting colours, apply the rule of thirds, try different angles, crop the image unexpectedly and highlight shadows and fades.

DON’T POST TOO MUCH
Posting one to two times a day is enough: one in the morning and one in the evening. I find the best times to post are around 6am and 4pm when most people are scrolling down their feeds.

REMEMBER, YOUR PROFILE IS A GALLERY
People will like a beautiful picture, but most will only follow if your whole gallery is appealing. Attract followers by mentioning community accounts like @cityofcapetown, @cityofjohannesburg, @cityofturban and @vscosouthafrica

– By Dan Michel

Tired of looking like a deer caught in headlights when someone takes a picture for Instagram? Here’s how to look your best when you’re snapped

1/ Hair
Your go-to product should offer flexible hold so you can quickly tame hat hair. Mitch Clean Cut Styling Cream fits the bill.

2/ Skin
To avoid photo glare, turn to a product like Vaseline MenFace Oil Control facewash; it removes excess oil so your skin won’t look so shiny.

3/ Beard
A length of about 2.5cm gives you the most camera-friendly edge, according to Bruce Dean, a professional groomer in New York.

4/ Clothes
Darker hues are typically flattering in photos. And whatever your build, wear clothes that fit well to look more put together.

5/ Stance
A three-quarter angle slims you, says photographer Weston Wells. To enhance the effect, look directly at the camera. Lots of people naturally tilt their heads to the side. “Keep your head straight by pointing your chin toward the lens,” suggests Wells. You’ll instantly appear taller as well as more distinctive.

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5/ Stance
A three-quarter angle slims you, says photographer Weston Wells. To enhance the effect, look directly at the camera. Lots of people naturally tilt their heads to the side. “Keep your head straight by pointing your chin toward the lens,” suggests Wells. You’ll instantly appear taller as well as more distinctive.

– By Dan Michel
While my neighbours were out of town, their 15-year-old son threw a big, rockin’ party until 3 am. Do I tell them? A good neighbour doesn’t tell another man how to run his home. But he does alert him to unusual events. Is loud music at 3 am common on your street? No? Then casually clue the parents in – without accusing their kid of being a screwup, even if he is one. If you say nothing, they probably won’t hold it against you, but they won’t necessarily think highly of you either. Hell, you’re doing the kid a favour here. Being considerate of others is an important lesson – and it’d be okay if he learned that the hard way.

Should I worry that my girlfriend’s always going out for drinks with her colleagues? (They’re all guys.) How the hell should I know? I don’t know your girlfriend or her colleagues. Do you? But if she’s spending as much time with the guys as you say she is, then don’t sit at home worrying like a wuss. Next time, invite yourself along and see how she reacts. Maybe you’ll make new friends. Once you get acquainted with her crew, you’ll know whether to worry.

My dad still likes to play touch rugby with me, but he doesn’t move like he used to. Do I school him, or take a dive? Seems like a lose-lose. Think back, kiddo. When you were a kid, you had no idea your dad was dropping the ball on purpose and letting you win. Why? Because you didn’t know any better back then – but he does. If you try that stuff now, he ain’t gonna like it one bit. The man’s no fool. So play the game the way he taught you. And if you win, tell him you learned from the best. (Then gloat a little.) Maybe it’ll remind him of the good old days and lessen the sting of being an old fart. Oh, and try not to speak tackle your dad. It hurts more at his age.

I feel like a fraud with this Tooth Fairy act. My kid’s 6. Can’t I just tell her the truth? Fraud is Bernie Madoff and Charles Ponzi. Not you. And guess what? Kids figure out the Tooth Fairy thing on their own. C’mom, man... two wings, millions of kids? Money in exchange for a freaking tooth? Sooner or later, these big fat holes in your story will dawn on them. And if you win, tell him of the good old days and lessen the sting of being an old fart. Oh, and try not to spear tackle your dad. It hurts more at his age.

I screwed around with a colleague, and I’m worried my wife will find out. Should I fess up, or keep quiet? Walk into your colleague’s office. Shut the door. Tell her it was a mistake – and say it like you mean it. It can’t happen again. Now try to get a read on her: does she agree? Has she blabbed? Will she? If she regrets it too, then you can shake on a vow of silence. But if she’s casual about it or seems to think it’s the start of an affair, then you’re in a pickle, my friend. I’d come clean with the wife. You have better odds of dodging divorce if she hears it from you than if she gets the news from someone else.
GET F.K.T.

What can you do when you’re bored of running the same old marathons? When even the best trails in the country become repetitive? Follow the lead of the fittest, most intrepid athletes who run up mountains in the Fastest Known Time. Time for you to meet your next running challenge

BY ADHARANAND FINN
THE ORIGINS OF F.K.T. are hazy, as are its rules and records. What is known is that Peter Bakwin started the Fastest Known Time website in 2005. A scene quickly grew up around it in the US, with people setting records for completing iconic trails, such as the 359km John Muir Trail through California’s Sierra Nevada (3 days 7 hours 36 minutes) and the epic 3,500km Appalachian Trail (46 days 11 hours 20 minutes). Runners are expected to document their trips to prove they’ve broken a record, but the unofficial nature of the exercise is inferred by the name. Someone may have done it faster without evidence.

F.K.T. has been brought into the mainstream by top trail runners (including SA phenomenon Ryan Sandes), but there’s one athlete in particular that has made it famous. Kilian Jornet is an ultra-marathon runner, ski mountaineer and all-round endurance athlete. The 27-year-old Spaniard has won virtually every major trail and mountain race going— including the Ultra-Trail du Mont-Blanc (three times), the Western States 100 and the Skyrunner World Series (six times) — and now he’s turned his attention to F.K.T.s.

Ryan Sandes has already got a few F.K.T. records, and he’s guaranteed to collect more...
**F.K.Ts Represented a Little-Known Subculture**

Within the endurance community, until Jornet turned up. But with his status as an ultra-icon, a film crew recording his every move and social media hot on his heels, F.K.Ts have become the biggest topic of conversation among those who like to go further and faster. You don’t have to turn up on a certain day, start when the gun goes off and run with hundreds of other people. You can set off when you are ready, alone, and in some of the most beautiful locations on earth. “The subversive, DIY nature of F.K.Ts is the primary attraction for me,” says top US ultra-runner Anton Krupicka. “It’s a primal way of testing yourself.” Jornet’s goal for the last few years has been to break the F.K.Ts up and down seven of the world’s most iconic mountains, from Mont Blanc to Mount Everest. The highest mountain in the world claims the lives of climbers every year. Yet Jornet aims to race to the summit, and down again, with minimal kit.

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**You’re Only Limited by Ambition**

If those mountain F.K.Ts sound almost beyond credulity, you’ll be interested to learn that he’s already halfway through fulfilling his goal. Mont Blanc has been surmounted; he made it to the top and back in 4 hours 57 minutes. The Matterhorn he completed in an incredible 2 hours 52 minutes. Some of these records had stood for over 20 years, only to be ticked off, one by one, by a young Catalan with serious wanderlust and a phenomenal engine. (His VO$_2$max is thought to be around 90 ml/kg/min - yours is probably closer to the 45 mark.) To many he is the greatest athlete on the planet. To others he’s a reckless attention seeker. To an elite few, he’s little more than a fast-moving target.

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**Competition Raises Performance**

When Jornet burst onto the scene his F.K.Ts looked unassailable. But last summer, an unknown Ecuadorian called Karl Egloff changed all that. In August 2014 he beat Jornet’s four-year record over Kilimanjaro by 32 minutes, ascending and descending in 6 hours 42 minutes. This is a route most people take seven days to complete. Then, earlier this year, he trounced Jornet’s time for Argentina’s Aconcagua, the western hemisphere’s highest peak, just two months after it had been set. This time he shaved off an hour. “People say I’m following Kilian,” Egloff tells me in a Skype call from his home in Quito, Ecuador. “But when I ran up Kilimanjaro, I’d never even heard of him. I wasn’t even a runner.” This much is true: Egloff was a mountain bike rider and mountain guide who happened to be taking a few tour groups up Kilimanjaro as part of his job when he decided to see how fast he could make it up and down on his own. “Afterwards,” he says nonchalantly, “everyone told me I’d broken Kilian’s record. So I googled him and was like, wow.” Egloff may be a novice runner but he has one key advantage over Jornet. Being a mountain guide from Ecuador means he has spent his life at extremely high altitudes. “I’ve been over 5 000m over 5 000 times,” he says. So when his boss, mindful of the publicity generated after the Kilimanjaro FKT, suggested Aconcagua next, Egloff jumped at the chance.
Over the two weeks prior to his FKT, Egloff climbed the summit three times. His relationship with the terrain verges on the spiritual at times. “I wanted to really connect with the mountain,” he tells me. “It sounds crazy but I’m that type of person who has to get the permission of the mountain. I wanted to sleep there, drink its water. You can also learn a lot from fast attempts,” he says. “Like, the first time we raced up Aconcagua, we didn’t bring enough clothes and I was too cold.” The second time he got up there, just three days later, he found a dead body at the peak. “This makes you think twice. You think: what the hell am I doing? So one of the first things I promised my team when we saw that was, whatever happens, I will not go past my limit. I always tell people who want to try what I do: first go slowly, spend some time up there. Because if you think mountains are like parks, you are wrong. For me, if the mountain says no, I don’t challenge it. We are ants against the mountain.” Jornet is similarly pragmatic about the threats posed. “It’s dangerous, of course, it’s really dangerous,” he says. “But it’s a choice. Everybody needs to know their capabilities.” Still, in spite of the respect these men have for their environment, the risks involved in their speed attempts have provoked much criticism. Jornet needed to be rescued after racing up a peak with his girlfriend, mountain runner Emelie Forsberg. The Alpine rescue boss was less than impressed, telling French media: “I’m angry when I see the continued rise of sneakers despite our requests [to use proper climbing gear].”

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**THE WORKOUT**

**Hit the Ground Running**

1/ **Kettlebell Squat**  
3 SETS OF 20 REPS, 60SEC REST, DAILY  
With your feet flat on the ground and your back as upright as possible, squat (A). Come up slowly (B), arms out, and repeat. Holding a kettlebell in front of you makes your core work that bit harder, so you can maintain good running form all the way to the finish line.

2/ **Spider-Man Crawl**  
3 SETS OF 60SEC ON, 30SEC OFF, DAILY  
Staying low to the ground and keeping your back straight, extend your left hand while simultaneously bringing your right knee to right elbow (A). Switch sides and repeat (B), moving around the floor at a decent pace. Your Spidey sense won’t tingle; your abs will.

3/ **Kenyan Hill**  
3 SETS OF 10MIN ON, 2MIN OFF, WEEKLY  
A great way to build your strength for hill running, and for the last few kilometres of any long race. Find a medium-gradient hill (or set an incline on the treadmill) and run up and down at 80% of your max speed. Keep the pace hard for the full 10min.

4/ **Kenyan Fartlek**  
25 SETS OF 1MIN ON, 1MIN OFF, WEEKLY  
This is every Kenyan runner’s staple. Pick a route of 13 to 16km (or hop on the treadmill) and set your watch to beep every minute. Run the first minute easy, the next hard, 25 times. After 50 minutes, if you haven’t gone the distance, jog home as a warm down.

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**PREPARE FOR UPS’N DOWNS**

**NAIL THE BASICS AND THE PBs WILL FOLLOW, SAYS ADHARANAND FINN**

1/ **Take baby steps**  
Running up and down steep hills takes practice. Take little steps on the way up, but try to keep your rhythm bouncy and loose. Don’t be afraid to walk if it’s too steep; even the top runners walk.

2/ **Play fast and loose**  
Keep your upper body relaxed, especially on the way down. The footing will be uneven and falls are par for the course, but if you’re tense you’re more likely to hurt yourself if and when you do trip over.

3/ **Know your enemy**  
Prepare by acclimatising; slowly if it’s high altitude. Walk the course before you run it – knowing the route will boost your time, and save your life if the weather turns.

4/ **Don’t rush it**  
If you fancy trying for an FKT, do it on your terms. It may never be the perfect moment, but if a storm’s a-brewing or you have a cold, put it off. This is no stroll in the park – you need to be fully prepared.

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**Mountains Require Respect**
You Need to Do Your Homework

To Chris Kempster, editor of Trek & Mountain magazine, the problem is not with athletes of the experience and talent of Jornet and Egloff. It is with those they inspire. He says he was on Aconcagua recently when a female runner came through Base Camp on an attempt to run up the mountain, "but she fell ill at Camp Two and had to be evacuated out by helicopter. The difference between her and Jornet was that he had spent time acclimatising and familiarising himself with the route before attempting his record. This runner just attempted it without any sensible preparation." Indeed, despite the obvious risks, more and more people around the world are ditching their hiking boots, lacing up their trainers and taking to the mountains. Once a three-hour marathon becomes a walk in the park, this can be the next, illogical step.

Hall of Fame

Go The Distance

Want to beat the FKT elite? Here are the record times to aim for:

Drakensberg Grand Traverse (209km)
RYAN SANDES AND RYNO GRIESEL
41hr 49min

Fish River Canyon
RYAN SANDES
6hr 57min

Mount Everest
PEMBA DORJE SHERPA
8hr 10min

Matterhorn
KILIAN JORNET
11hr 48min

Kilimanjaro
KARL EGLOFF
6hr 42min

Aconcagua
KARL EGLOFF
11hr 52min

Besides safety, FKT has no restrictions.

“When I go up a mountain light and quickly, I feel free,” says Egloff. “I feel as though I’m flying like a condor.” It’s this freedom, I realise, to be travelling light, racing through the mountains like a wild animal rather than a pack-horse, that motivates FKT chasers. Whether it will be quite so serene when he and Jornet take on Everest is another question altogether. To break the FKT they’re going to have to burn some rubber, without ropes or oxygen. The record from base camp to the summit is currently held by Nepalese Pemba Dorje Sherpa, who scaled the mountain in just 8 hours 10 minutes. Breaking this record will require intense preparation and immense physical effort. Most of all, it will involve great risk and require more guts. Both believe they have what it takes. Do you?

Recover with Cross Training and Lower Intensity Running

These extreme challenges can knock even the best runners off their stride. Egloff says it takes about a month to feel strong again after an FKT attempt. But these racers don’t recover by sitting around eating ice cream. Egloff recovers with short runs and mountain biking, while Jornet’s team says he is usually out running again the next day. “But this is something that very few can do,” says his agent. “Kilian’s body is used to this kind of exercise because he trains eight hours a day.”

Start Here

NEED SOME INSPIRATION? CHECK OUT THESE THREE RACES AND LOCATIONS FOR YOUR NEXT FKT CHALLENGE

1/ Lion’s Head
The perfect starting point for the FKT rookie, this is a relatively short but steep route, and is the venue of the massively popular LionHeart race (redbullionheart.com).

2/ Rhino, the Peak
For more experienced, fitter racers, this mountain in the beautiful Maloti-Drakensberg range rises to 3 015m. rhino-thepeak.co.za

3/ Plattekliip George, Table Mountain
Also for beginners, this short, steep route that starts near the lower cableway station, and consists of a 2.1km long run, 780m climb 800 double steps. Looking for a challenge? The K-Way Plattekliip Charity Challenge tests how many times you can run up the route (taking the cable car back down to the start) in a 13-hour period. The record: 12, by AJ Calitz, 2013. charitychallenge.co.za
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Muscle Fitness

Australian Tim Robards may be famous for his TV and modelling work, but it’s at the pull-up bar that he’s built his most impressive body of work. Here’s how The Robards Method will lift your training to new heights.

BY AARON SCOTT • PHOTOGRAPHS THOMASZ MACHNIK • P51

LIFE ABOVE BARS

Australian Tim Robards may be famous for his TV and modelling work, but it’s at the pull-up bar that he’s built his most impressive body of work. Here’s how The Robards Method will lift your training to new heights. By Aaron Scott • Photographs Thomasz Machnik • P51
To watch Tim Robards go to work on a chin-up bar is a truly astonishing spectacle. All his slick TV appearances aren’t a patch on the performance he’s putting on this afternoon. Strict-form muscle-ups, spinning clap chin-ups, reverse-grip front levers - all are being snapped out with apparent ease by an imposing physical specimen who stands 185 centimetres tall and weighs 88 kilograms.

There are other moves, too - moves so complex I can’t even conceive of a name for them. So impressive is the display that a busload of Chinese tourists who’ve arrived at this public park to take pictures of the Sydney skyline, turn their backs on the sparkling view and snap photos of Robards instead.

What we’re watching is the apogee of The Robards Method, a training protocol that aims to squeeze maximum effect from the humble outdoor gym. And, as the man himself tells me as he perches precariously atop the chin bar, it’s a protocol that’s based on a simple piece of wisdom: “If you can’t control your own bodyweight, what’s the point of trying to lift something heavier at the gym?”

**Method to the Madness**

Robards began investigating calisthenics two and a half years ago, partly because he was bored with pushing heavy weights in the gym and partly because his gym sessions had left him hobbled with a clutch of niggling injuries. And it wasn’t just his own body that was suffering: as a chiropractor he was constantly treating men whose bodies had cracked under the weight of a barbell. “That’s when it dawned on me,” he says. “You need to be able to control your own bodyweight before you start throwing weights around. That’s what led to The Robards Method.”

He ticks the benefits of calisthenics off on his fingers. You don’t need a gym membership; a set of chin and dip bars will suffice. You don’t need a boot-full of equipment; a TRX trainer is an optional extra. And you don’t need hours of free time - 30 minutes will allow you to hammer every muscle in your rig. “Calisthenics simply doesn’t give you an excuse not to exercise.”

And the results? Well, a cursory glance at Robards’ physique can stand as Exhibit A. But his protocol is about more than mere aesthetics: it’s about functional performance. “It’s all about getting your body up and over an obstacle,” he says. “It’s about explosive leg movements that require fine balance. It’s animalistic, it’s leaping from tree to tree.”
Of course, the rank-and-file can’t simply amble down to their local park and snap out the wild moves Robards is ripping out for us this afternoon. For this reason, his Method is a progressive protocol that awards karate-style “belts” as you move onto ever-more-challenging exercises. Wrap a black belt around your waist and you, too, could attract the lenses of slack-jawed tourists.

Upwardly Mobile
In the headlong pursuit of strength and bulk, Robards believes too many men ignore mobility and flexibility. “We get all our big muscles strong and we move those muscles in single planes,” he says. “But until you learn to control multiple planes of motion, you’re opening yourself up to injury.” And when Robards talks about mobility and flexibility he’s not just talking about stretching. He’s referring to the strategic employment of exercises that actively strengthen inhibited or under-used muscles.

Take the Wall Angel, for example. This exercise (featured in the workout on the next page) involves standing with your bum, lower back and shoulders pressed against a wall, then extending your arms overhead while keeping your hands and elbows in contact with the wall. “This is a great thoracic mobility exercise that also engages your core,” says Robards. “It’s perfect for people who sit at an office desk. Do this exercise properly and you’re not just stretching – you’re activating your rhomboids to push against the flexibility restrictions that come from hunching over a keyboard all day.”

For Robards, mobility exercises are not only key to improving performance and preventing injuries – they’re also vital for managing existing injuries. Playing footy on the beach years ago, he tore his labrum, a lip of cartilage in the joint between the humerus and the shoulder blade. It was an injury that should, by rights, have ended under the surgeon’s scalpel. Instead, he staved off surgery by assiduously strengthening the small, supporting muscles throughout the shredded joint.

To see him in action on a chin bar now is proof positive his approach is effective. “Usually, the reason an injury persists is a lack of flexibility or mobility – so work on that, and you attack the underlying issue.”

Granite Foundation
Talk bodyweight exercises and you instantly think chin-ups, push-ups or dips. But what of the legs? Surely the big prime movers, like the quads and the glutes, require more than body-weight squats and lunges?

Robards shakes his head. By his estimation, more than half of his work as chiropractor involves treating injuries that have arisen from people overloading bars and grunting out sloppy sets of squats or deadlifts. “People come into my studio, tell me they hurt their back at the gym, and I ask, ‘Were you doing deadlifts?’ Nine times out of 10, the answer’s yes.” Invariably, the problem is a faulty link in the posterior chain, with the lower back picking up the slack of under-activated glutes or rhomboids.

In his view, a smarter approach is to focus on brutal bodyweight moves like single-leg squats, pistol squats, Sissy squats and duck walks. “These are the sort of moves you want to conquer first before you get under a loaded barbell. The best thing about them is that even if you’re working towards perfect form, you’re not going to injure your back, because you don’t have 100 kilos on your shoulders.”

It’s a statement that reflects the central aim of any calisthenics programme – exerting complete control over your own body. Sound like a worthy goal?
MOBILITY EXERCISES

01/ Wall Angel
Stand against a wall, your bum, shoulders and head touching the wall, feet 15cm from the wall. Engage your core to flatten your lower back against the wall. Raise your arms and bend your elbows, keeping your hands and elbows touching the wall. Slowly extend arms straight up. Do three sets of eight reps.

02/ Gecko Stretch
Assume a deep lunge position, your right knee bent at 90 degrees, your left knee touching the ground. Lean forward, place your left hand on the ground for support and, using your right hand, push your front knee out to the side. Hold for 20 seconds, repeat three times, then change legs.

03/ Deep Squat
Assume a deep squat position, your hamstrings resting on your calves. Using your elbows, push your knees out to the side. Engage your core, thrust your chest forward and keep it upright while maintaining a neutral curve in your lower back. Hold for 20 seconds and repeat three times.

STRENGTH EXERCISES

04/ Duck Walk
Assume a deep squat position. Engaging your core and keeping your torso upright, place your hands behind your head. Walk forward 10 metres, taking small, controlled steps. That’s one rep; do three.

05/ Archer Push-Up
Assume a push-up position, your hand double shoulder-width apart and pointed slightly outwards. Keeping the movement slow and controlled, lower yourself over your right hand, so your left arm straightens. Repeat, lowering yourself over your left hand. Do 11 reps. Too hard? Complete the reps on your knees.

06/ Clap Pull-Up
Grip a pull-up bar with an overhand grip. Pull yourself up explosively, aiming to get your belly-button to the height of the bar. At the top of the movement, remove your hands from the bar, clap, then grab it again. Can’t do this advanced? Rather start on a lower bar with one foot on the ground, and then aim to improve. Do 11 reps.

07/ Skullcrusher
Assume a push-up position on a waist-high bar, your hands shoulder-width apart. Walk your feet backwards about 20cm. Keeping your elbows tucked in, lower yourself until your head is just above the bar, then push yourself back to the start position. Do 11 reps.

08/ Walking Negative Pull-Up
Looking along a pull-up bar, grab the bar with a neutral grip, left hand closer to you. Hoist your chin to the bar, then remove your left hand and lower yourself using your right hand only. Then grip the bar slightly forward with your left hand and repeat the lift (with switched hand positions). Do 11 reps. Too hard? Lower with both hands but “walk” one hand forward after each rep.

DIRECTIONS
Start with the three mobility exercises as a warm-up, then complete the five strength exercises as a circuit, keeping rest periods to a minimum. Aim to complete three circuits in total. Why the 11-rep count? “In The Robards Method, I want people to push themselves 110%,” says Robards. “So instead of going to 10 reps with each move, go to 11. Occasionally that’ll mean one arm does an extra rep, but just even that out in the next set.”
Fast-Forward Your Gains

Harness the real-world strength benefits of this potent 3-part training plan. You’ll pile on muscle and build a never-say-die cardio engine.

By Trevor Thieme / Illustrations +ISM

**DIRECTIONS**

Do each of the workouts below once a week for a month. Perform the exercises as a circuit, moving from one to the next without rest. Once you complete all the moves, rest 2 minutes. That’s 1 circuit. Do 3. Begin and end every workout with 10 minutes of foam-rolling.

**WORKOUTS**

**MONDAY**

- Turkish Getup
- Kettlebell Swing
- Decline Sit-Up
- Skipping
- Farmer’s Walk

**FRIDAY**

- Pull-Up
- Pike Push-Up
- Decline Sit-Up
- Walking Lunge
- Wall Toss

**TURKISH GETUP**

Lie with your left leg bent, right arm out to your side, and a kettlebell in your left hand above your chest. Roll onto your right forearm. Straighten your right arm, raise your hips, and thread your right leg behind your left so you’re half kneeling. Stand up; reverse the move. Switch sides and repeat. Do 1 per side.

**DECLINE SIT-UP**

Lie with your back on a decline bench with your legs secured in the footrests and fingertips behind your ears. Raise your torso off the bench. Pause at the top; then return to the starting position. That’s 1 rep; do 20.

**KETTLEBELL SWING**

Set a kettlebell on the floor. Spread your feet, push your hips back, and grab the handle. Swing the weight between your legs and then up to chest level, thrusting your hips. Swing it back between your legs. That’s 1 rep; do 10.

**FARMER’S WALK**

Grab a pair of kettlebells (each half your body weight) and let them hang naturally at your sides. Keeping your chest up and shoulders back, walk forward for 45 metres and then turn around and walk back.

**SKIPPING**

Hold the handles of a skipping rope and stand with your arms at your sides and the rope on the floor behind you. Swing it over your head and down toward your feet. Jump on the balls of your feet. Land softly, never letting your heels touch down. Continue for 60 seconds.
Hardgainer’s Rules for Faster Growth:

1. Eat More
   Sounds simple, but it’s hard to get right. Aim for six meals a day consisting of 40% protein, 35% carbs and 25% good fats.

2. Harness the Combination of Creatine and Caffeine
   The first is essential for muscle growth and recovery, the second provides the energy needed to lift heavier for longer.

3. Shake It Up
   Protein shakes offer plenty of workout nutrition, and they’re easy to take.

Offset Suitcase Deadlift
   Holding a kettlebell in your right hand, stand with your right foot forward and left heel off the floor. Push your hips back, bend your knees, and lower your body until the weight is ankle high. Pause, and rise back up. Do 12 reps, switch sides and repeat.

Shoulder Press
   Stand tall, holding a kettlebell just outside your shoulder with your opposite arm extended to the side. Brace your core and push the weight directly above your shoulder. Slowly lower the weight back to the starting position. Do 5 reps, switch sides and repeat.

Pull-Up
   Grab a pull-up bar using an overhand grip that’s slightly beyond shoulder-width, and hang at arm’s length. Pull your chest to the bar, squeezing your shoulder blades together. Pause, then slowly lower your body back to the starting position. Do 5 reps.

Pike Push-Up
   Assume a downward-facing-dog position: feet together, arms straight and hips raised. Bend your elbows and lower your body until your forehead nearly touches the floor. Push yourself back up to the start. Do 5 reps. Too easy? Try it with your feet on a bench.

Walking Lunge
   Hold a kettlebell in each hand. Brace your core and step forward with your left leg, lowering your body into a lunge. (Your right knee should almost touch the floor.) That’s 1 rep. Stand and immediately repeat with your right leg. Alternate legs so you’re “walking”. Do 20 reps (10 per leg).

Wall Toss
   Stand with your right side a metre from a wall and your feet slightly beyond shoulder-width. Hold a medicine ball straight out in front of your chest. Rotate left and then quickly right, tossing the ball into the wall. Catch it. Keep tossing and catching for a total of 7 reps. Switch sides and repeat.
The Gain / I wasn't a skinny kid. I left school weighing roughly 85kg, fairly fit and slightly overweight. Through my twenties I gradually gained more flab, occasionally losing a few kilos, but they inevitably returned - and with interest. Refined carbs and sugar were the big culprits.

The Change / In September 2013, just prior to turning 30, I stepped on the scale. It read 101kg - I got the fright of my life. It was then that I knew change was needed else my thirties were going to be a write off. I set myself a short-term goal: by the time I turned 30 in December, I wanted to be fitter, lighter and healthier.

The Strategy / I started by looking at my diet and chose to adopt the Atkins approach. I emptied my cupboards, reduced my beer intake (drinking only a bit of red wine and whisky instead), cut out soft drinks, fruit juice, chocolates and sweets replaced them with biltong and nuts. I still allowed myself dark chocolate, but it had to be 70% cacao or darker. I limited my carbs to roughly 50g a day and I coupled this with training twice a week, and lost 1kg a week and built lean muscle. I trained with Neil Zietsman, who has a company called 3S Functional Training. He was instrumental and extremely motivational in my quest to improve my health and body. We did a mix of high-intensity interval type drills, core strengthening and some weight training to help stimulate muscle growth. Our goal was to strengthen all the muscle groups, fix weaknesses and improve cardiovascular health. At around 90kg my progress slowed down - this got me to start running and sprint training on my own twice a week. Over a few months this got me to 85kg, which had actually been my goal. Then in early 2015 my girlfriend had decided to quit sugar so I joined her. This meant no fruit, milk, or cheese, and my chocolate was now 90% cocoa. I did a lot of research on diet and food quality. I went gluten- and dairy-free (other than grass-fed farm butter), increased my healthy fats, reduced my protein intake, ate more vegetables, and where possible ate organic veg and free range meat and fish (grass fed or wild). Carbs were kept to an absolute minimum (only sweet potatoes, butter nut, berries and nuts). I drank more water, made my own healthy tea, and ate a lot more superfoods. The Reward / By September 2015 I weighed 80kg, but it was all the peripheral changes that amazed me. It seems they’re endless but the most noticeable were needing two hours less sleep each night; stable blood sugar levels and no afternoon drowsiness; consistent energy; better concentration; improved mood; improved patience; and a notable improvement in my skin.

The Result / I lost a total of 21kg, built lean muscle, and transformed my build. My waist has gone from a 38 to 32. My resting heart rate has dropped from 70bpm to 45bpm and I've improved in all sports. I now have a passion for sourcing quality ingredients and researching their benefits. I hope to be able to inspire people in the future.
Burn Fat by Hitting Tar

Five of the best running plans – and our favourite pairs to get you off the couch and onto the road

1/ Take a Break
BEST IF... YOU'RE SHORT ON TIME

THE SCIENCE Research in the Journal of Applied Physiology found that of guys doing 60 minutes of cardio training, those who took a 20-minute break at the halfway mark burnt more fat than guys who exercised for the full hour without a break. It’s thought the first session mobilises the fat into your blood stream and the second session burns it off. It’s like a devastating two-punch combo to an expanding waistline.

THE METHOD Run for 30 minutes at a leisurely pace, stretch your upper body for 20 minutes, then run for another 30 minutes. Alternatively, you can run one 30-minute session in the morning before work and another session after work... just don’t wear the same kit or you’ll clear the gym with your body odour.

2/ Routine Buster
BEST IF... RUNNING BORES YOU

THE SCIENCE For some people, running for long periods can be about as stimulating as standing in a Home Affairs queue. If this is you, then you’ll be pleased to hear that a study at Laval University in Quebec, Canada, found people doing cardiovascular exercise for 45 minutes burnt less fat than those who did interval training for 25 minutes. If 45 minutes on the trot is too dull for you, follow the study’s 25-minute programme below to cash in on fat-zapping benefits.

THE METHOD Warm up with a slow 3-minute run to get your muscles ready for action. Run as fast as you can manage for 30 seconds, then rest for 60 seconds. Repeat this 8 times. Then run as fast as you can for 60 seconds and rest for 60 seconds. Repeat this 5 times.

3/ Time Is Running Out
BEST IF... YOU WANT TO BUILD STAMINA AND ENDURANCE

THE SCIENCE Slow-and-steady can win the race against fat. A study published in The Canadian Journal of Sport Sciences found that when subjects increased the amount of time they ran from 30 to 45 minutes, the rate at which they burnt kilojoules after the run doubled. When they ran for an hour they burnt kilojoules after their run than after a 30-minute run: not a bad return on your fat burning investment.

THE METHOD If you can’t manage to run for 45 minutes then work your way up to it by adding 5 minutes each week to what you can currently manage. You can also alternate between running and walking in 10 minutes intervals to clock off your time. The more time you rack, the better.
THE SCIENCE This strategy will help you to oxidise more fat and prepare your muscles and lungs for sports by increasing your pace to a level that’s just below your lactate threshold (find yours below). A paper in the Journal of Sports Science and Medicine found that unfit guys who ran at just below their lactate threshold burnt twice as much fat as trained athletes.

To find your threshold, run at a slow pace and increase your speed every 2 minutes. Stop when your effort is 7 out of 10, or when you feel a burn in your muscles and conversation is no longer possible. This speed is your lactate threshold. Run just below this pace.

THE METHOD Run 3 sets of 15 minutes at this pace with 2 minutes rest.

THE SCIENCE You can force yourself to torch more fat by continuing to burn kilojoules after you’ve finished running. A study in the Journal of the American College of Nutrition found people who did high-intensity exercise in the form of long intervals burnt more kilojoules when they were resting than people who trained at a lower intensity. That means couch time, but with benefits.

THE METHOD Run 6 sets of 400 metres at a pace that’s 8 out of 10 in effort. Jog slowly for 2 minutes to recover. Run 8 sets of 200 metres at a pace that’s 8 out of 10 in effort. Jog slowly for 2 minutes to recover. Run 2 sets of 800 metres at a pace that’s 8 out of 10 in effort. Jog slowly for 4 minutes to recover.
Get Back in Shape with the Belly Off Plan!

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“It’s made me a healthier person and it makes me feel like a man – a damn good one”
WH Stander

“It’s not just a body change – it’s a mental change, and there are a lot of health benefits to that”
Thsekedi Rammula

“Living well is motivation in itself”
Steve Neofitou

“I’ve beaten back pain and asthma with this plan”
Anru Nel
UNCLE JERRY WAS A PIRATE. HE WASN'T REALLY A PIRATE, BUT HE looked liked one. His thin moustache was pointed at the ends and his dark hair was slicked back and he had a twinkle in his eye and a gap between his front teeth so that when he smiled at you - my mom always said - you couldn't stay angry at him.

Why would anyone be angry with him in the first place? He was thrilling. When he walked through the door the lights came on and the volume of life was goosed a little higher. When Uncle Jerry was around life became exciting.

My mom liked Uncle Jerry, but she didn't like the effect he had on my dad. Jerry was my dad's older brother, and older brothers matter, even when you have your own family and you're old enough to have made your own mistakes and be your own man. Jerry would disappear for months on end and then suddenly return like a pirate boarding a ship and say, 'I've got an idea, Bonzo! We're going to make a million with this one!' And my mom would say, 'No, we're not going to make a million, Jerry. You can make a million if you want to.'
And my dad would nod and say in a very serious voice, “That’s right.”

But then my dad would pour the two of them a couple of brandy-and-ginger-ales, and even though it was already a big one Jerry would say, “Better make it a double, Bonzo”, and then they’d go outside to sit on the stoep and before long their voices would drop and Uncle Jerry would be doing the talking and my mom’s eyes would narrow because she would know that Uncle Jerry was telling my dad his new idea for making a million.

**Uncle Jerry had lots of good ideas. In the short period that I’d been alive he had at different times owned a bottle store and a fleet of taxis and a Mozambican squid boat. He’d been part of a syndicate that was looking to fix horse races and a Mozambican squid boat. He’d been part of a syndicate that was looking to fix horse races and a Mozambican squid boat. He’d been part of a syndicate that was looking to fix horse races and a Mozambican squid boat.**

Once, when they were kids, Jerry talked my dad into believing that he was Superman and that he could fly. My dad climbed up a tree and onto the roof of the house. He was maybe four or five years old. “You can do it!” Jerry shouted from down below. “You can do it!”

And my dad believed he could do it, and he jumped off the roof and broke his arm.

“See?” my mom said when my dad told us that. “That’s exactly why you shouldn’t listen to him. He’s always trying to talk you into things that will get you hurt.”

And my dad agreed, but I think he also remembered that when he jumped into the air and didn’t fly, Jerry was just as shocked as he was. Because that’s the thing about Jerry – he was a believer. He believed in all his schemes, and when he told you that you’re brilliant and you can change the world or become a millionaire, he believed that too. It feels good to have someone believe in you. It makes you want to jump off a garage. For my dad to say no to Uncle Jerry, he would have to say no to a lot of things. He wouldn’t just have to say to his hero and his big brother and his protector. He would also have to say no to believing and being believed in, and no to having dreams. He would have to say no to ever being able to fly.

And for what? To carry on working as a sales representative hawking motor lubricants, working twelve-hour days and weekends just to keep the wheels of our home still slowly turning. A tired wife. Ungrateful kids. His duty.

I can’t remember the precise details of Uncle Jerry’s last scheme, but I think it involved buying some disused mine that apparently still had lots of gold in it. He and my dad sat outside and they talked and talked, and my mom went out to tell them to come in and have supper and they said they would but they just sat there and talked. My mom ate with us at the table and she didn’t say much but her lips were pursed, and I knew she was waiting to see if my dad would come inside and look for his chequebook. Eventually the door opened and my dad came in. He didn’t say anything, he just came and sat down at the table and ate his supper, even though it was cold by then. And Uncle Jerry just kind of waved from the doorway and said he’d better be going.

“Don’t go, Jerry,” said my mom, but he did.

“Then when he’d gone my mom touched my dad’s hand, and said, “Thank you.”

That night my dad was standing outside in the darkness on our tiny patch of lawn, looking at the sky, and I went and stood beside him. It would have been perfect if he’d said something to me about the choices that men make and the reasons they make them, but he didn’t say anything I can remember. But I remember we took a pee together, side-by-side into the flowerbed, because that’s what men do.

We knew Uncle Jerry had been married four times but another two wives we didn’t know anything about turned up at his funeral. A little while after that conversation with my dad they found him in the front seat of his car with the engine running and the garage door closed and a hosepipe attached to the exhaust. There was a half-read Louis L’Amour cowboy novel on his lap, and an empty brandy bottle beside him.

My dad never really spoke about it.

All he said was, “Jerry always had his priorities wrong. He should rather have finished the book and only drunk half the brandy.”
Sex + Relationships

BREAKING POINTS

If it's happier endings you're after, use our guide to make parting sweeter for the both of you

BY NICHI HODGSON
THE LEAST PAINFUL WAY TO REMOVE BODY HAIR.

Removing that unwanted body hair doesn’t have to be a painful experience. Soft ‘n Smooth is a hair removal product for men that’s tough on hair, but gentle on skin, ensuring that you stay smoother for longer.
Q1

**I spent a night with someone else during “a break”. Now we’re back together. Should I tell her?**

It really depends on the rules that you agreed for your time apart. Unless it was explicitly stated that any sexual encounters wouldn’t be held against each other at a later date, I would advise that you’re better off keeping quiet. Bear in mind that some actions (like a throwaway one-nighter) can cause a disproportionate amount of distress.

**AN EXCEPTION TO THE RULE...** If you’ve slept with someone in your social circle (more common than you’d think). If you don’t trust those in the know to stay schtum, then you’re better off confessing before your girlfriend finds out.

Studies from Penn State University found that women feel more let down by emotional cheating than the physical act itself, so make every effort to assure her that it was just a poorly timed, badly judged and purely physical dalliance - nothing more.

Q2

**My girlfriend keeps spending time with her ex. She says they’re just friends, but should I call her out on it?**

What exactly do you mean when you say “spending time”? Are they working together? Going for dinner? It’s the level of intimacy which indicates if that time-spending is appropriate or not, so adapt your stance accordingly. If she’s choosing time with him over time with you, then make that the focus of your concerns, rather than it being an issue of trust. Bear in mind that it’s him you should be wary of, not her. The University of Wisconsin found that young men, regardless of their relationship status, are more likely than women to desire their friends. Admitting that you distrust this guy will come across as endearing jealousy rather than stir-crazy paranoia.

Q3

**My ex-girlfriend has invited me over for a one-off dinner and the option of “dessert”. Good idea or bad idea?**

Scientifically speaking, yes, it has merit. It’s all to do with emotional arousal, a subject explored in detail by the famous “bridge” experiment conducted by Dutton and Aron back in 1974. When you feel intense anger, fear, jealousy or catatonic despair that you’ll never get to see each other again, it creates excitement - and it’s when that excitement is transferred to sex that the sparks start to fly.

Realistically, though, remember that if you get hooked back into the relationship, that passion will quickly level out again. So, by all means, accept the invitation and enjoy yourself. But for the sake of both your and her sanity, only ever do it once.
I’m recently divorced after a 10-year marriage and I want to get back in the saddle. It’s like riding a bike, right?

When you’ve been in a relationship for a long time, it not only affects what approach you should take to dating, but also how long you should wait before diving in. Whatever your friends have told you, this probably isn’t the time for Tinder. “There is a grieving process to go through – regardless of how ‘okay’ you feel,” says therapist Tania Glyde. “But once that’s passed, a good adage is ‘date for fun, not for the one’. And think carefully about what you want from a partner. Even running after the opposite of what you had before may lead you to the same place.”

If you really are committed to getting back in the saddle as soon as possible, the best new hook-up app is Mixxxer. More straightforward than most, its users are, frankly, all about sex. Which makes it a far easier place to find the NSA arrangements that will supply the physical and ego boost you’re after, while still giving you a mental break from relationship stress.

Q4

Our sex life is on its last legs and it feels like we can’t be bothered to keep the whole relationship going. But neither of us wants to admit it. How do I bring it up?

It’s undeniably sickening being the one to call time, but it’s vital for your mental health to do so. Research published in the Journal of Health and Social Behaviour shows that men suffer the fallout of bad relationships more than their female counterparts, thanks to the fact you guys simply don’t like to open up to your friends. While you’ll moan about work or the government over a drink in the pub, she’s bouncing her feelings, worries and desires off her friends, family and colleagues. So, setting up a time to talk to your partner as soon as possible is the first step. As for what happens next, use relationship therapist Susan Quilliam’s three-point strategy: do it in person, do it firmly and do it kindly.

Firstly, pick a public location to meet face-to-face to put the brakes on emotional outbursts. Then make sure you don’t enter into any “bargaining” – it will only defer or prolong the agony. Finally, don’t blame or shame. Then head out with a mate for a few beers and a long chat. You’ll feel much better for it.

Q5

AFTER A SERIOUS RELATIONSHIP, THERE IS A GRIEVING PROCESS TO GO THROUGH... BUT ONCE THAT’S PASSED, DATE FOR FUN, NOT FOR THE ONE

NEW

SEXY RANGE
OF LINGERIE
AVAILABLE

Live a sexier life

Visit our online shop filled with the world’s latest lingerie & toys. Whether you want to enjoy it on your own or share the fun with someone special, it can only lead to one thing: pure pleasure! Live a sexier life with www.passionfruit.co.za.
WHEN I TOLD MY BOYFRIEND I wanted to go to a strip club with him, he did a double take. It wasn’t like me, true. But I had a couple of ulterior motives. First, I hoped to bring back the old sex-crazed lunatic in him. Second, I wanted to test my ability to handle jealousy. Where better to deal with both than at an upmarket strip club? Its couples package would be an experiment that could either blow up the lab or spark a whole new line of research. But Mark was a bit worried. “I don’t want you to get drunk and launch into this long talk about whether I like a stripper,” he said. He wasn’t being a jerk; this was a legitimate possibility. “I won’t... I don’t think,” I replied.

It had always seemed to me that Mark’s relationships with his exes were carnal and liberated, whereas he and I tend to be in our heads about everything. Plus, I’m always overthinking his attraction to other women. So rather than skirt these issues, we were now going to see how it felt to tear that skirt right off.

The dancers weave around the floor like droids with breasts. We agree to each choose one stripper – mine would give just me a dance and his would give us a couples’ dance. Within 20 minutes, I spot a woman to my liking. My type, as it turns out, are women who resemble the popular, preppy girls who might have bullied me in high school: beautiful creatures with long, blond hair and perfect tans. Angela is wearing a short lavender dress. What’s under the dress looks natural.

To ease into the lap dance, the three of us chat awhile, as if we’re in a queue at Vida. Picking up on my awkwardness, she becomes instructive and shows me how to twerk in Mark’s face. I give it a shot: he’s so transfixed by my ass that he barely looks at Angela. Considering that my relationship with Mark is often so cerebral (debates, jokes, long, meandering talks) being straight up objectified feels sexy to me.

Then it’s Mark’s turn to choose a dancer. He takes forever, almost like a kid savouring his birthday wish. Eventually he picks Mila, a 30-something with a long, dark ponytail and leather garters who’d been dancing on the main stage earlier. It’s an unsurprising choice: she looks like the porn women he favours. But he’s bashful about receiving a lap dance in front of everyone, so we request a private space.

Now we’re alone with Mila in a room that reminds me of a divorced dad’s finished basement. Mila takes charge. She encourages us to move closer together, then slips her hands under the waistband of Mark’s jeans. She kisses my neck; her perfume is overpowering, her moans performatively loud. It’s a phony orgy, too synthetic for me to be in the moment. But Mark (or Mark’s penis) is thoroughly convinced. Still, I’m not jealous. Maybe it’s the numbing power of the Champagne, or the fact that this bears zero resemblance to real-life foreplay. I take note of the elements of her handiwork (whispering in his ear and kissing his neck) that seem to be working him up.

Soon our half hour is over. “We could stay another 30 minutes,” Mila purrs. “I mean, sure, if you want to,” Mark fumbles, not realising that Mila is angling for another R2 000 jackpot. Clearly the blood is pumping in regions far afield from his brain.

By the time we arrive home, we’re too tipsy and tired for sex. But we make up for lost time in the morning, enchanted by what we’ve become after fixating on a bunch of random women’s backsides: the chill, genuinely-not-jealous girlfriend, the fratty, inarticulate boyfriend. I may not have experienced Mark’s level of arousal, but for one randy night, we learned the virtues of twerking, not talking.
My girlfriend posts racy selfies on Instagram. I don’t like to share her. My problem? 

SFISO

A change in behaviour or a suspicion that she’s posting to impress someone else merits a conversation, but if this habit predates your relationship then there’s not much you can say. You signed up for it. I’m sure you’re also aware that social media’s filtered, edited narcissism has little to do with real life - the one you are a part of. If you’re still uncomfortable sitting back and letting the virtual world like your girl, then tell her you feel protective or neglected when she’s always online, and suggest some healthy, offline alone time. Still a little #jelly? It might be a dealbreaker.

### What’s the smoothest way to approach a woman at the gym?

**JAMES**

This is one of the last places most women I know want to be hit on. Sure it’s flattering, but we’re there to work, earphones on, music blaring, not feel like we’re being observed. If you want to take your chances, pick your moment when she’s between sets and ask her for help adjusting the TRX bands or a machine, then gauge her response. Keep in mind she’ll be distracted or self-conscious about her sweaty appearance. A shrug and quick departure means game over, but if she lingers to help and is open to chatting, offer to buy her a post-workout smoothie.

### How soon can I ask out the hot new hire at my office? She’s been here two weeks.

**ANDILE**

Woah! Too soon. You’re at work, not a bar, buddy, and you don’t want to be labelled as That Guy – the penis type who is just waiting for his moment. She’ll be wanting to find her feet and fit in, so be nice – help her navigate the quirky scanner, make a joke about the unspoken kitchen etiquette, or inform her about the IT dude’s love for jelly bean bribes. Then be the guy who invites her to join the gang for drinks after work. Soon enough you’ll know her status and whether an office romance is on the cards.

### I lost a girlfriend because of all my triathlon training. But my current one doesn’t care. What gives?

**SEAN**

Um, nothing? Hey, we’re all different. Sounds to me like you’ve found a good match: she has a life of her own and is keen for you to have separate interests. That’s healthy. Besides, when you’re not into that amount of training, it can be pretty, um, boring to hear about every kay. What isn’t healthy is if her disinterest extends to other areas of your life and she’s not interested in cheering you on.

### My girlfriend posts racy selfies on Instagram. I don’t like to share her. My problem?

**SFISO**

A change in behaviour or a suspicion that she’s posting to impress someone else merits a conversation, but if this habit predates your relationship then there’s not much you can say. You signed up for it. I’m sure you’re also aware that social media’s filtered, edited narcissism has little to do with real life - the one you are a part of. If you’re still uncomfortable sitting back and letting the virtual world like your girl, then tell her you feel protective or neglected when she’s always online, and suggest some healthy, offline alone time. Still a little #jelly? It might be a dealbreaker.

### MAKE HER FEEL AT HOME

**LOAD UP ON DEAL-SEALING AMENITIES**

**Skin Lotion**

Look for options like Kiehl’s that has a neutral or slightly herbal base and shows her you take care of yourself. Offer to help with application.

**Thicker Towels**

Don’t let her sashay to the shower wrapped in a Stormers logo. Invest in some plush, highly absorbent towels made of Turkish or Egyptian cotton.

**Good Shampoo**

Stock the shower with something a step up from your basic 2-in-1. In general, anything from John Frieda will make your fiancée glad she got naked.

**Softer Pillows**

Whatever you two are doing in bed, good down pillows with a high (500-plus) fill power and fresh pillow case will make her head happier than those polyester lumps.

Follow Amelia on Twitter @MH_girlnextdoor or email your questions to girlnextdoor@mh.co.za

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Fast Food Redux

At MH we’re no puritans: we say if you want to eat dirty, go for it and pay your dues later. But that’s not to say you can’t cheat smart. We took three junk food classics and reinvented them so they retain their smutty flavour while trimming a bit of nutritional gristle.

BY DAVID MORTON  PHOTOGRAPHS JOBE LAWRENSON
GOODBYE COMPLEX
HELLO STRESS-FREE

Introducing Vehicle Accident Assistant from Momentum... A faster, more convenient way to process your claim.

Vehicle Accident Assistant allows you to submit your claim at the touch of a button by giving you step-by-step instructions on what to do if you have an accident.

Speak to your financial adviser or SMS “HELP” to 42024 to request a quote.

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It’s the way forward

Momentum Short-term Insurance is an authorised financial services provider. A subsidiary of MMI Group Limited. Ts & Cs and standard rates apply.
DOUBLE TROUBLE
Cheat day just got a little bit more virtuous, with our remodelled king of the McDonald’s menu.

It was always going to begin here. The Golden Arches represent the graveyard of many a well-intentioned night out, where weakened men see their training goals fade into blissful greasy oblivion. And while the Big Mac may be McDonald’s totemic offering, it’s the Double Cheeseburger that most often snares glutinous men with its 25.9g of fat and 1 919 glutinous kilojoules.

On occasion, we love ‘em, but frankly a man could do without the guilt. So Men’s Health asked Mark Sargeant, Michelin-starred chef and no stranger to a backlit menu himself, to reappraise the double decker. “Remember that everything is in there for a reason,” he warns. “So the sweetness of the bun, the richness of the meat and the cheese, the sweet, sharp tang of the ketchup, mustard, onions and pickles - it’s the combination of those flavours that makes it so moreish. “

“That said, you could lose a lot of the fat. A gourmet burger is thick, so you need a lot of fat in the meat so it can render out while cooking and keep the burger moist. But McDonald’s patties are thin, cook quickly, and are best reproduced with very lean meat.”

Ask your butcher for extra-lean mince (no more than 5% fat) and roll into two evenly-sized balls. Press flat on a piece of waxed paper until about 3mm thick, then leave them in the fridge to rest for an hour. Rinse the freshly chopped onion under cold water for five minutes, then pat dry, wrap in kitchen towel and squeeze out as much of the juice as you can. “This gets rid of a lot of the sharpness and gives them that slight crunch,” says Sargeant. Now season your patties with salt, pepper and - your secret ingredient - onion powder for that intensely savoury flavour. Dry-fry in a hot pan for two minutes on each side.

Finally, assemble your ingredients and place your double cheeseburger in the microwave on high for 15 seconds. Madness? “There’s method here. It heats the ketchup, mustard and onions, melts the cheese and fluffs up the bun,” says Sargeant. “The result is that very same squashy warmth you get when pulling one out of a brown paper bag.”

YOU WILL NEED
FOR THE BURGER
200G HIGH-QUALITY GROUND LEAN BEEF (ROUGHLY 5% FAT)
½ SPANISH ONION, CHOPPED
ONION POWDER
1 Brioche Hamburger Bun
4 SLICES DILL PICKLE
2 SLICES CHEDDAR CHEESE
1TBSP KETCHUP
½TBSP MUSTARD

FOR THE SHAKE
2 CUPS VANILLA ICE CREAM
1 ¼ CUPS SEMI-SKIMMED MILK
2TBSP COCOA POWDER
1TBSP MALT DRINK (HORLICKS)
PINCH SEA SALT
DARK CHOCOLATE, FOR GRATING

SIDE ORDER #1/ A SUPERIOR SHAKE
Sure, it’s sugary. But using quality dark chocolate means you’re getting a good slug of antioxidants, along with all its other storied benefits, from protecting against cancer to warding off stroke and heart disease. Meanwhile, the sea salt balances out the flavours, so you’re not just drinking an ice cream. Place all the ingredients in a blender and whizz until smooth, but not so long that the ice cream completely melts. Pour into a glass then generously grate over the chocolate. Drink through a straw, obviously.
Noodles have enjoyed a culinary renaissance of late, with breathless blogs attesting to the clarity of three-day bone broths demonstrating our newfound foodie affection for the Japanese staple. All of which has precisely nothing to do with curry flavoured pot noodles. The “slag of all snacks” (to borrow a one-time UK advertising slogan) is about as Japanese as beans on toast. And let’s face it, when the fridge is empty, the shops are shut and resolve is low, it’s no worse for it.

Except deep down we know it is worse, and that’s because of three pesky letters: MSG. It’s great for moreish flavour; bad for headaches, weight gain and a host of other side effects. In an authentic Japanese noodle dish, the glutamate would come naturally from dried kombu or bonito flakes. The stuff you buy from the petrol station shop comes out of a food lab.

In fact, pot noodles mix MSG with another additive, called Disodium 5 ribonucleotides, which combine to produce a flavour 10-15 times stronger than MSG alone—call it MSG Max, if you will. What’s clear is that in reinventing the classic pot, packing in as much taste without resorting to a heart-shaking level of salt is Mark Sargeant’s challenge.

Start with a suitably heat-retentive receptacle. A wide-necked flask would be ideal but, in a pinch, a protein shaker will do. Throw the spinach in first and then gently crumble over the dried noodles. “Break them up into pieces small enough to cook quickly and evenly, but long enough to making slurping enjoyable,” says Sargeant. Slice up the cherry tomatoes and spoon over half the curry pot. “Stock pots like this are normally meant for a whole curry, so you’ll be getting a big hit of umami flavour,” he says. Crucially, they don’t add any flavour enhancers.

Next, add the chopped ginger, chilli and garlic. “Even though you want strength of flavour, grating these would overpower everything,” says Sargeant. “Instead, aim to slice it as finely as you can without going so small they dissolve when you add the heat.” Fennel seeds, half the garam masala and a few coriander leaves top it off.

The final ingredient is, of course, hot water. Cover the dry mix by about 3cm and screw on the lid. Give it a gentle shake and leave it to stand for a few minutes. In keeping with tradition, give it a good stir, before leaving it to stand again until the noodles are nice and soft. Combine your sauce ingredients and mix in at the last minute. Now all that’s left is to grab a fork—and to burn the roof of your mouth. Some things never change.

### YOU WILL NEED FOR THE NOODLES
- Baby spinach leaves, handful
- Nest of dried egg noodles
- 5 cherry tomatoes, halved
- ½ Knorr curry flavour pot
- 1 garlic, clove, finely sliced
- 1 small chilli, finely sliced
- 2½cm piece ginger, finely chopped
- ½ tsp toasted fennel seeds
- ½ tsp garam masala
- Coriander leaves, handful

### FOR THE SAUCE
- ½ tsp garam masala
- 2 tbsp Greek yoghurt
- 5 large mint leaves, chopped

### SIDE ORDER #2/ SAUCE OF POWER

Three digestion-boosting ingredients will help you process the carbs in the noodles. In a bowl, mix half of the garam masala, which smooths the digestive process, some probiotic Greek yoghurt, then mint, to reduce bloating. The rest you know; add liberally after the first stir.
THE BUCKET LIST

With just a little planning and some nutritional fowl play you can fry up a meal that’s finger-licking good for your health.

Takeaway fried chicken was the first fast food to really find itself in hot water with the health police. And yet any honest man would confess to a few transcendent roadside experiences with a deep-fried drumstick, every moist bite a drum-roll of crisp, spicy skin and succulent flesh.

The secret to that succulence is the huge pressure fryers in the KFC kitchens, which seal the juices in the chicken. Assuming you don’t have a steam engine filled with boiling fat in your own scullery, Sergeant suggests an alternative: brining.

“A couple of days before your feast, dissolve your salt in a litre of warm water and leave to cool,” he advises. “Then submerge the chicken and leave to chill in the fridge for 24 hours. The brine draws out natural moisture from the chicken and replaces it with flavoured moisture. It changes the molecular structure of the meat to make it more dense, but remain juicy.”

This helps to keep the moisture of a bargain bucket, without trading in all the nutritional benefits of a healthy bird. After its day of swimming in the brine, pluck out your protein and dry it with kitchen paper. Now put it in another clean container, cover with the buttermilk, then stick it back in the fridge for another 24 hours to tenderise some more. (This might be a good time to do some exercise.)

When you’re finally ready to cook, fill a deep fat fryer two-thirds full with vegetable oil and heat to 165°. While that’s going, mix the flour dredge ingredients in a plastic bag. Take the chicken out of the buttermilk, put it into the bag and shake it like hell to coat the lot. Fry it until it’s that special shade of golden brown, then leave on a wad of kitchen towel to drain off any excess fat. Put into a (clean) bucket, or eat it right there on the counter top. After three days of waiting, not even the Colonel would be offended.

YOU WILL NEED FOR THE CHICKEN
- 4 Bone-in Chicken Thighs
- 4 Chicken Drumsticks
- 500g Salt
- 500ml Buttermilk
- Vegetable Oil

FOR THE FLOUR DREDGE
- 200g Flour
- 100g Gluten-Free Flour
- 4 tbsp Cornflour
- ½ tsp Cayenne Pepper
- ½ tsp Garlic Powder
- ½ tsp Onion Powder
- 1 tbsp Sea Salt
- 1 tbsp Smoked Paprika
- 1 tsp Baking Powder

FOR THE COLESLAW
- 1 Red Onion, Sliced
- 1 Carrot, grated
- ½ Red Cabbage, Shredded
- 3 tbsp Grain Mustard
- 3 tbsp Mayonnaise
- ½ Lemon, Juiced
- 1 Medium Red Chili, Finely Chopped
- Coriander, Chopped
- Sea Salt and Black Pepper

Fat’s good for you now, remember? In any case, this has 15% less of the saturated stuff compared to the takeaway version.

SIDE ORDER #3/ A HEALTHY DOLLOP OF COLESLAW

Done well, the classic accompaniment to fried chicken is a powerhouse of vegetables. Get the seasoning right and it will be hot enough to enhance the softer flavours of the main meal. Give the onion a good rinse in a colander under cold running water for about 5 minutes, then leave to drain and pat dry in a clean cloth. Then simply stick all the ingredients together in a bowl and mix it up well. Go harder on the chilli and lemon for a fresher, fatburning finish.

Two pieces of chicken contain two-thirds of your RDA of niacin, which boosts the release of energy from the rest of your food.
Should You Take Creatine?

Power your workouts by fueling up with this nutrient

BY K. ALEISHA FETTERS
ILLUSTRATIONS ZÖHAR LAZAR

1/ What It Is
When you eat meat, your liver and kidneys take some of the meat’s amino acids and make creatine. Your bloodstream then shuttles the creatine to your muscles, which convert it into creatine phosphate, a potent form of cellular energy, says dietitian Kate Patton. Creatine supplements are often creatine monohydrate, which your body also converts into creatine phosphate.

2/ Why You Need It
The creatine phosphate in your muscles generates adenosine triphosphate (ATP): your fuel for explosive exercise. But you deplete your stores after just 10 seconds of sprinting or weightlifting, says Eric Rawson, an exercise scientist at Bloomsburg University. So more stored creatine phosphate means more power for growth-stoking reps.

3/ How to Consume It
If you do explosive exercise, take in 15 to 20 grams of creatine a day for five days to preload your system. Then, after this phase, consume 2 to 4 grams a day. To get there, you can either eat more protein (beef, pork and salmon all have 2 to 3 grams of creatine per 220g) or take a creatine supplement. This amount will maintain your creatine phosphate levels before and after exercise, Rawson says. Just be sure to consume the creatine with carbs, which help your muscles retain more of it.

WHAT ABOUT THE SIDE EFFECTS?
No, creatine won’t hurt your kidneys. That’s the consensus of reams of studies reviewed for a 2012 report in the journal Amino Acids. But it may have one positive side effect: Korean research suggests that creatine supplements may speed the effects of antidepressants when taken together with the medication. Experts speculate that ATP may keep your brain cells healthy. Talk about being a musclehead.
There’s No Wi-Fi in Paradise

Time alone might be the key to busting stress and keeping your mind healthy. Shhh! This is the new science of solitude.

BY CLINT CARTER

THE ADIRONDACK PARK IS ONE OF THE LARGEST protected areas in the US. It covers nearly 240 000 km² and is home to deer, moose, bears and otters. I live in New York, home to more than 8.4 million humans, and many of them are in my face and on my phone and computer, all the time. It seems the animals have an advantage here, surrounded as they are by peace and quiet, and I’ve wondered: could I swap screen for green? Could you?

My relationship with solitude is complicated. I’ve always felt that a dose of time alone would do me good, but the idea of disconnecting makes me uneasy. That’s not unusual for men, given what University of Virginia scientists found when they strapped electrodes onto people and sent them, one at a time, into a room about the size of a janitor’s closet. (Coincidentally, that’s about the size of my flat.) The scientists told them they’d be in there alone for 15 minutes. If you get bored, they added, you’re welcome to zap yourself.
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Prior to the experiment, all the participants had already been shocked once. The women received a jolt of 2.3 milliamperes; the men, 4 milliamperes. It hurt, too. Many said they’d pay money to avoid another shock. Yet here’s what’s batshit crazy: when left alone with their thoughts, two-thirds of the men hurried the time along by shocking themselves at least once more. One guy shocked himself 190 times. The researchers dubbed him an “outlier” and scrubbed his data from their analysis.

But I can relate to that guy. I’m as guilty as anyone of distracting my brain, though I usually do it with mindless Internet browsing. Immediately after logging off at the end of a workday, I’ll check my email on my phone. Having drinks with a pal, I’ll jump on Instagram when he takes a piss or as soon as he mentions his boring new CrossFit addiction. And count me among the 53% of mobile users who, in a survey by AT&T and the Centre for Internet Technology and Addiction, claim to feel actual, physical discomfort when they lose cell service or forget their phones.

The same survey revealed that more than 60% of us sleep with our devices within arm’s reach. I’m that guy too: I can swipe through my lock screen without even opening my eyes in the morning. Often the first thing I see - before the soft light coming in through my window, or my fiancée lying next to me - is my phone’s LED-backlit home screen. Clearly I have a problem. Chances are, so do you.

YOU’RE HARDWIRED TO SEEK social connection. That’s especially true when you’re under stress: researchers in Germany found that after being forced to speak in front of a crowd, men are more likely to act friendly towards others, presumably to create a wider network of stress-relieving friends and allies.

This impulse to connect has served us well for most of human evolution, when being part of a tribe offered us safety and more opportunities to reproduce. But today it’s leading us toward self-destructive behaviours. With Facebook, LinkedIn and Tinder always at our fingertips, we’re increasingly scrolling and swiping through social data streams to fill the gaps between stress-inducing meetings, email surges and morning commutes.

And with what benefit? In a University of Michigan study, going on Facebook - unlike real human interaction - was followed by a 13% jump in worry and 22% spike in loneliness, both of which are potent stress reactions in their own right.

So let’s get this straight: rather than making us feel as if we’re part of a bigger tribe, so-called social media is making us feel nervous and isolated? And where do we go for a quick hit of social connection? Back online, of course. The Internet is like a drug, and I’m starting to think of the Adirondacks’ 240 000 km² as my rehab.
On this front, researchers agree: time spent by yourself has the power to heal. “Solitude is like sunlight,” says Robert Coplan, editor of *The Handbook of Solitude*, a collection of essays from 60 researchers. “A little bit is good for everybody. Even raging extroverts can probably benefit from time alone.” Science tells me that, with some time alone in the woods, I might begin to retrain my brain to function without a screen in front of my face, to learn to appreciate all the individual moments that make up my life. “Solitude is not like isolation – you’re not disconnecting yourself from the world,” says Paul Salmon, an associate professor of psychology at the University of Louisville. “You’re taking time off so you can reconnect in a stronger way.”

DEEP IN THE PARK’S LESS-travelled western side is my destination: a lean-to that’s suitably remote from New York. To reach it, I hiked 21km from the parking lot. For a few hours, I walked in one of the sudden downpours common in the mountains. I would have complained, but if you bitch in the woods and nobody hears it, do you still make a whiny sound? I trudged in silence.

I arrived at my campsite a few hours before sundown. I cooked, ate and unrolled my sleeping bag. I grew bored quickly. With no digital news feed to scroll through, I located the camp’s logbook, which was filled with musings of previous visitors. Flipping the pages, I found evidence of other solo hikers. One night in August 1986 (I was 2 at the time), a man reached the spot just before a heavy downpour. As he sat looking out at the whipping rain, he wrote: “I thought it fortunate that my human eyes, as a brief visitor, were given the gift of sharing in the beauty that goes on here every day. It clears a man’s thoughts and wakes him up concerning those things in life which are really important – not money, success, the contents of your wallet. You’re not your fucking khakis. “ Had smartphones been available in his dystopia, he simply didn’t need the digital supplements.

Me? I missed my phone. Had I known just how comfortable the Adirondacks were, I might have chosen a WiFi-enabled wilderness. But going *sans* service was for the best: in modern life, your phone’s digital tether to the Internet makes certain that you’re never fully present. Earlier this year, researchers at Florida State University found that smartphone alerts – minor pings and buzzes – sap your concentration whether or not you actually look at the screen. You might as well have stopped what you were doing to reply. Even when you’re here – *bub-bing!* – suddenly you’re not. But if you split your mind between the digital and the physical world, you’re shutting down a part of your brain that’s responsible for a healthy outlook on life.

“There are certain brain regions that activate during periods of rest, and deactivate when you’re responding to external stimuli,” says Jessica Andrews-Hanna, a research scientist at the University of Colorado’s Institute of Cognitive Science. These regions - peppered primarily throughout your anterior and posterior cingulate cortex, hippocampus, and medial temporal lobe - make up your “default network”, and they’re essential to your ability to make sense of your past, plan your future, and dissociate yourself from the frequently troubling external world.

Sitting alone in my lean-to, I start thinking about my brain. I listen closely, hoping to hear old parts firing back up after years of neglect. But nope. Just crickets.

One of the biggest breakthroughs in default-network studies came 10 years ago, when MIT scientists wired rat brains to see what was going on when the rodents unexpectedly took a break from the hunt for cheese in a maze. Were their little Templeton brains flatlining as they paused to groom themselves or stare off at a wall? Hardly. They were rapidly replaying the maze in reverse. Signals in the hippocampus that fired during the hunt for rat chow were now firing many times more – only backwards. The little buggers were retaining what they had just seen, to aid in future cheese prospecting.

This likely parallels something that happens in the human brain, and especially in the default network. “The consensus is that these brief periods of rest are similar to sleep, in that they’re important for learning and memory and restoring our brain,” says Andrews-Hanna. When we’re not busy reacting to emails and fast-food signs and morning talk-show hosts, our brain has time to understand recent events and form theories about how they might affect the future. Far from being a waste of time, doing nothing and spending time alone is how you determine whether you’re happy with your life's recent turns. It allows you to figure out whether you’re chasing your dreams or someone else’s, to separate your essential self from your career, your bond, your intrusive smartphone and all the other things that stress you out.

In these silent woods, I conjured the image of Brad Pitt as the nihilist prophet Tyler Durden in *Fight Club*. As a role model, Durden was questionable. But his message was on point: “You’re not the car you drive. You’re not the contents of your wallet. You’re not your fucking khakis.” Had smartphones been available in his dystopia, he would have included them too. Understand the Durden principle, my newly empty mind tells me, and you’ll feel a lot less pressure to get it all right all the time.

“Solitude isn’t something you do for just four nights, once a year. If you care about your mind, it’s something you work toward with daily practice. “I ask people how long it’s taken them to get into physical shape,” says Robert Coplan, editor of *The Handbook of Solitude*, a collection of essays from 60 researchers. “A little bit is good for everybody. Even raging extroverts can probably benefit from time alone.” Science tells me that, with some time alone in the woods, I might begin to retrain my brain to function without a screen in front of my face, to learn to appreciate all the individual moments that make up my life. “Solitude is not like isolation – you’re not disconnecting yourself from the world,” says Paul Salmon, an associate professor of psychology at the University of Louisville. “You’re taking time off so you can reconnect in a stronger way.”
Salmon. “They say a couple of years. I tell them to apply that same thinking to their mental health.”

If singing “Kumbaya” at the campfire by yourself doesn’t sound like a great time, well, you’re not alone. But if you can grow more comfortable with solitude, then you’ll develop a sharper sense of purpose and a heightened sense of control over the stressful events in your life. You can train yourself.

In one study, a researcher in the Philippines asked people to take themselves out for a “date”. It was up to them whether they went on a long walk in the park or out to dinner, but they were encouraged to remind themselves during the date that they were spending time with someone special: themselves. Yeah, cheesy. But based on surveys taken before and after the experience, the researcher found that the participants’ opinions of spending time alone improved by 21%. My experience in the Adirondacks was similar: it turns out I’m pretty good company.

THE MORNING AFTER I REACHED my destination, I finally wandered over to what I believed to be the remotest spot in the state. Once there, I found a moss-covered log. I thought to sit but changed my mind when I saw a freakish hockey ball-sized frog wriggling underneath it. So instead I stood, drinking in the quiet forest, wondering if I was supposed to be feeling something deeper than mild amusement.

I opened my pocketknife and dug some dirt from my nails. I took a swig from my water bottle and stepped off the path to have a piss while congratulating myself for marking the spot as my own.

The irony of reaching the remotest place for miles was this: after the two nights it took me to get there, I didn’t really need it. My experience of solitude had begun as soon as I’d set off on the trail. Hell, it began when I drove away from the city or maybe even when I asked my boss if he’d let me skip work. I’d begun my mental shift away from thinking like an office cog or as a person bound by obligations outside my control. I was not the contents of my wallet, I was not my fucking khakis.

If I needed further validation that time alone was worthwhile, I received it as I rounded the last bend after my hike. In the middle of the gravel parking lot stood a man wearing a backpack. He looked impatient. Nearby, from behind a car, a kid screamed, “I can do it!” He was approaching a full-blown tantrum, and a group of adults were busy trying to tame the boy’s fits. The man in the middle of the lot, I realised, was part of this group. He was hiking with some friends, or possibly relatives, and their monster child. He saw me approaching, and his face softened.

“Did you hike alone?” he asked.

“I sure did,” I said.

“You’re lucky.”

I smiled. He was right.
**Save Your Life in One Minute**

Just like your car, your body has its own diagnostic system. Find out what it’s saying about your critical components to avoid a breakdown.

**1/ Heart Geometry Quiz**
Diamonds trump heart disease. Bend each index finger in the form of an upside-down J; then press the nails together, viewing where they meet from the side. See a tiny diamond-shaped gap? If not, you may have "clubbing," a thickening of the fingertips possibly due to low blood O2. This could signal heart disease or even lung trouble, says cardiology expert Dr Prediman Krishan Shah.

**CHANGE YOUR GRADE**
Have your heart and lungs checked to make sure they’re not in immediate peril. All clear? Try high-intensity interval training. You’ll improve your VO2 max, which is the best way to get more oxygen-rich blood pumping through your arteries. In a Japanese study, men who did 13 minutes of HIIT five days a week for eight weeks improved their VO2 max by over 22%.

**2/ Brain Balance Challenge**
Act like a stork to spot stroke risk. Stand and lift one leg, keeping your knee bent and your eyes open. Watch the clock: if you can’t hold the pose for 20 seconds, you may be at higher risk of stroke. Researchers in Japan recently found that difficulty balancing on one leg may signal that the small arteries in your heart have narrowed, which is linked to loss of motor coordination and cognitive decline.

**CHANGE YOUR GRADE**
Rein in high blood pressure: it’s a risk factor for small-vessel disease, says study author Yasuyaru Tabara. Press a finger against your right nostril to close it, then breathe in and out through the left nostril. Switch sides and repeat. Keep alternating for 15 minutes. In a study from India, people who did this averaged a 4.5-point drop in systolic BP.

**3/ Life Span Sit-Stand Exam**
Stand with your ankles crossed and your arms in front of you. Sit on the floor. Stand up. You’ve just gauged your longevity, say scientists in Brazil. A perfect score is 10; deduct ½ point for each time you lost your balance, and a point for each knee or hand you used for support. In the six-year study, people who scored below 8 had death rates up to five times higher than those of people with better scores.

**CHANGE YOUR GRADE**
The sit-stand exam measures your musculoskeletal fitness, a critical indicator of ageing, says study author Claudio Gil Araújo. So take up tai chi. Canadian researchers found that twice-a-week sessions can improve your overall musculoskeletal fitness after 16 weeks. And keep your weight in check, says Dr. Araújo. Extra flab can lead to a low score.

**4/ Prostate Finger Check**
There’s no “rectal” in this digital exam. Compare the length of your right index finger with that of your right ring finger. Longer pointer? Your risk of developing prostate cancer may be a third lower than if your index were shorter, according to a British Journal of Cancer study. The length of these digits is possibly related to your exposure to testosterone in the womb, which can influence your cancer risk.

**CHANGE YOUR GRADE**
Start a food fight. German scientists found that the prostate cancer risk of men who ate the most glucosinolate, a phytochemical in broccoli and Brussels sprouts, was a third lower than that of men who ate the least. And since belly fat is also linked to prostate tumours, nosh on tree nuts. A handful a week may help shrink your gut, say Loma Linda University researchers.
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THE [REAL] SOCIAL NETWORK THAT’LL SAVE YOUR LIFE

Your social circle plays the biggest influence on your waistline and your health. Here’s how to recruit your friends, wife, family, and even your dog into making you a leaner, healthier and happier man

By Arthur Jones
Photographs by Sean Laurenz
Page 124
THE BIGGEST DANGER TO YOUR HEALTH COULD BE YOUR BEST MATE.

It sounds like a tabloid headline, but there’s plenty of science behind it. The most important example: the landmark research provided by the Framingham Heart Study, which followed 12,067 subjects over 32 years. The results were astonishing, showing that a person’s chances of becoming obese increased by 57% if a close friend became obese — and they could be next door or in another province, location didn’t matter. Gender played a vital role too: if those friends were the same sex, the obesity risk jumped to 71%. This friend influence was stronger than the role of your spouse and family; but it was also significant: among married couples, the spouse was 37% more likely to become obese if their partner became obese, and with siblings, just over a third. It showed obesity is a disease that’s contagious, and South Africa is currently facing a breakout.

A study by The Lancet in 2013 examined obesity trends from 188 countries over 30 years. South Africa’s fat figures make for sad reading: 4 in 10 men are overweight or obese (seven in 10 women), and we’ve got the highest obesity rate in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The influence of friends doesn’t end at your waistline. Your real-life social network can help you do better financially, ward off depression, and keep your stress levels and blood pressure in check. But that’s not all: a meta-study by Brigham Young University of more than 148 different studies using over 300,000 subjects showed that a lack of true friendship and social support can be deadly. The subjects with sound relationships were found to have a 50% greater likelihood of survival than their friendless counterparts. It also backed up the Framingham study too: it found that the stronger the relationship between the two people, the stronger the link between their respective weights.

The best part about all this knowledge is that the problem is also the cure. Your social circle can also make you thinner, happier, help you live longer, and have a powerfully beneficial effect on your behaviour. A research paper in the Annals of The New York Academy of Sciences says that friendship is an evolved trait with health and adaptive benefits. Get this right and you won’t need to turn to men in white coats and stethoscopes for your health but rather your closest mates, better half, family, and of course, your furry family members too.

THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL ISOLATION

- As bad for your health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day
- As dangerous as being an alcoholic
- As harmful as never exercising
- Twice as dangerous as being obese

1/ Avoid the chubby hubby affect
A study published in the journal Health Psychology reports that men whose wives try to improve their eating habits by cooking healthier tend to binge away from home on unhealthy meals. But conversely, husbands who collaborate with their wives on meal preparation may do better at sticking to a healthy diet, say researchers. Your lesson: plan meals with your wife, and don’t stray when it comes to mealtime (or any other time). For the best kind of results, you can do food prep together where you make and pack the meals for work the next day. It takes some effort, but it’s a fantastic weight-loss tool.

2/ The couple that trains together, stays slimmer
A Harvard Public School of Health study found people on a weight-loss programme who had the support of at least one partner lost 2.9kg more than those going at it alone. And if you train with her, it can improve your post-exercise mood too. A study on training in mixed pairs in the International Journal of Exercise Science showed that mood after exercise was influenced by the presence and the perceived attractiveness of the participant’s partner. The hotter she is, the happier you’ll be - sounds like our kind of workout motivation.

3/ Focus on booze and snacks
A study in the American Journal of Public Health analysed the impact spouses, friends and siblings played on dietary patterns over the course of 10 years. They found that couples had the greatest influence on one another’s eating habits, particularly when it came to alcohol and snacks.

4/ Make rules about social media and your bedroom
A study in the Pediatric Obesity journal found students with access to one electronic device in their bedrooms were 1.47 times as likely to be overweight as those with no devices in the bedroom. That increased to 2.57 times for people with three devices. It can affect your quality of sleep (which is big cause of obesity) and your sex life. We shouldn’t have to motivate that second one.

5/ Reap the benefits of her diet plan
In a year long study in the International Journal of Obesity in 2008, it showed that if your wife or girlfriend follows a diet and lives healthier, you can lose up to 5% of your bodyweight in a ripple effect - even if you aren’t following any diet yourself. The main causes of this: better eating plans, healthier behaviour and less rubbish food at home.

6/ On dates, keep your testosterone in check
A study from Indiana University of Pennsylvania found that men who dined with women purchased an average of 4,774 kilojoules worth of food, versus 3,776 kJ when they ate with guys. “Men may be trying to prove their masculinity around women by buying more calories,” says study author Professor Marci D. Cottingham. So think smaller, and share with your date - whether it’s the starter or a salad or even dessert. And find somewhere with dim lights and soft music. According to a study in Psychological Reports, people who eat in restaurants that have dim lights and soft music consume fewer kilojoules than those eating under bright lights (like in fast food places).
1/ They can help lower blood pressure and the risk of heart disease
When you get stressed, levels of chemicals like norepinephrine and cortisol are increased, and according to Professor Blair Justice, a professor of psychology at the University of Texas School of Public Health, this is a state of “dis-ease” which can lead to plaque buildup in your arteries and heart issues. Spending time with your pooch partner can elevate dopamine and serotonin, nerve transmitters with calming properties. Studies have also shown that male pet owners have lower triglyceride and cholesterol levels.

2/ Walkies for the win
Researchers for the Journal of Physical Activity and Health found 19 published studies which showed that over 65% of dog owners walked their pooches for an average total of four walks and 160 minutes of walking weekly. The wagging tails provide a valid excuse to go for walkies, even if you don’t feel like it. “Most of the people who regularly walk their dogs may be more motivated by their pet’s health than their own health,” according to Elizabeth Richards, an assistant professor of nursing who leads the Dogs PAW (Dogs, Physical Activity, and Walking) study at Purdue University. About 40% of dog owners regularly walk their dogs, she says. Dogs love routine, so Fido will let you know when it’s time to get his leash.

3/ They help you connect
“Dogs bring out interaction from a person – it’s a natural thing for them – and that’s powerful for humans who have a hard time connecting with other humans,” says Linda Buettner, a professor of recreation therapy at the University of North Carolina. Playtime with your pooch also releases oxytocin, a bonding hormone, which helps you to relate better to others. And lastly, if you’re a single man, they can help you find someone to share walkies with. They’re a natural conversation starter (and a great judge of character too). Best places for this? Head to the beach, local parks, and running trails – they’re also the places that your pooch loves most.

4/ Their sense of smell can save lives
In two separate studies, dogs were able to sniff out cancerous cells. The first study was held at Schillerhoehe Hospital in Germany, the trial dog was able to detect lung cancer through smelling breath samples from 220 volunteers, and in a Japanese study at Kyushu University in 2011, a black Labrador named Marine was able to detect colorectal cancer in breath and stool samples. Now there have been a number of studies since showing success with different cancers too. We’re not saying your pooch can replace a doctor – or that all dogs have the same sniffing prowess – but he may just help you detect an early tumour.

5/ They can improve your immune system
And not just for you, but your kids too. According to Dr James Gern and his research in the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology, kids with dogs or cats at home were less likely to have allergies or asthma or eczema and had higher levels of specific immune system markers.

6/ Unconditional love is powerful
No matter how crappy your day has been, or how badly your boss behaves, your best bud will still wag his tail and lick your face at your front door. That helps to lessen stress levels, and is guaranteed to help lift your mood.

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1. Macaroni and cheese: +71%
2. Pizza: +34%

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**FAMILY**

Whether it’s your kids and wife or brothers and parents, there are a few small rules you need to keep in mind to keep your family fit, not fat.

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**1/ With family meals, serve up in the kitchen.**
Start with a salad. The healthiest items should be served first. In a study from the University of Leeds, England, dieters who began a meal with a green salad consumed about 20% fewer kilojoules than those who began with garlic bread.

**2/ Don’t visit anyone else’s plate.**
Hands off, buddy, you’ve got plenty already.

**3/ Mealtime shouldn’t be in front of TV.**
This goes for both with your family, or on your own. One study from the University of Massachusetts Amherst found that chowing down in front of the TV can bump up your intake of high-energy food by as much as 71%. It’s like Pavlov’s dog: you’re training your brain to associate your couch with food. This distraction effect works for computer screens too. Make supper time quality time by sitting at the table, away from any screens.
FRIENDS

1/ Pre-empt the waiter
If you’re going out for dinner with friends, be the first in your group to say you want the healthy meal option. Not only do you skip the peer pressure of choosing the same as the rest, but you also might start a positive influence on the rest of your mates. Someone has to be the catalyst, and while you may take some ribbing now, your friends will be grateful in the long run.

2/ Sign up for a team sport or join a club
Research in the American Journal of Health Promotion has shown this has long-term health and fitness benefits, and men are more likely to practice and play every week versus doing exercise in a gym format that they don’t enjoy. This was also shown in the 2014 Scandinavian Journal of Medicine and Science in Sports, as they found that drop-out rate in exercising in adult males is higher when they train on their own. In a study that looked at team sports (like soccer) versus traditional gym training (like spinning), the men were more likely to keep playing soccer because they enjoyed it, and weren’t doing it purely for weight loss and health reasons.

3/ Don’t copy your skinny friend
Most groups have one: the guy who defies nature by eating immense amounts of food while staying stick thin. What’s really frustrating is that by eating with Stretch, it may cause you to subconsciously pig out too. A study in the Journal of Consumer Research had varsity students watch a movie and snack with either a skinny or overweight mate. When the thin friend overate, the students followed suit, but they showed more self-control when snacking with a heavier overeater.

4/ Befriend your neighbour
Forget the cup of sugar, visit next door for a little prevention. Research from the University of Michigan shows that buddy-ing up to your neighbours may lower your stroke risk. People who rated their neighbours highest in friendliness, trustworthiness, and helpfulness were 48% less likely to suffer a brain attack than those in the least unified hoods. One theory is that neighbours can provide extra social support, which has been linked to better blood vessel flexibility.
5/ Loneliness is dangerous to your health
Besides not providing social support in weight loss goals, being lonely also puts your health in big danger, especially as you get older. Research done by the University of Jerusalem and reported in the 2014 Psychology Journal showed that people with high levels of loneliness were at greater risk for being diagnosed with ulcers, lung disease, cirrhosis, and heart failure. If you have a lack of strong relationships with partners, family and friends, then research shows you are also twice as likely to develop depression.

6/ Intervention is better than cure
Medicine and doctor’s visits should be the last resort. A study based on the Diabetes Prevention Program (and a ten-year follow-up study) sponsored by the National Institutes of Health showed that lifestyle intervention is much more powerful than any other treatment such as medication to prevent diabetes in those with pre-diabetes. With regular lifestyle support and education, participants lost 5% of their bodyweight and reduced their risk of diabetes by 58%.

7/ Keep the ego in check
When most men spend time with their mates, their self-restraint goes the same way as the no-shooter rule. Not only do you drink more alcohol with your friends, but your diet can take a hit too - research shows you consume up to 20% more kilojoules when having dinner with friends. And guys tend to be competitive. Slow down. Everyone wants to have a good time with mates, but you don’t need to go hard every time you’re out together. Your waistline (and head in the morning) will thank you.

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WORK COLLEAGUES
Just like real family, you don’t get to choose them, but you spend most of your waking day with them. Here’s how to get more job health benefits

1/ Use a smaller plate or container.
In research shown in Appetite, when you eat out of a larger container, you’re likely to consume more, even if the actual amount of food is the same in both containers. It can be a difference of up to 129%.

2/ Eat alone whenever you can.
When you make a plan to have lunch with a few other staff members, you can end up consuming up to 44% more food on average than when you eat alone. If you’re responsible, and have brought your own healthy portioned meal, that’s fine. But if you’re buying food or selecting from a staff canteen, it’s not going to end well. Research in the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics compared a pasta meal being consumed fast (in less than nine minutes) and at a leisurely pace (22 minutes). Eating it faster meant you have an average 11% increase in kilojoule intake. Give yourself a full lunch hour, and drink water throughout to slow down the pace and fill you up.

3/ Be the first with healthy habits
A study in PLOS (Public Library of Science) suggests that having overweight co-workers raises your own odds of piling on fat. The more overweight colleagues you communicate with, the more likely you are to be overweight too. “It’s not just family and friends whose habits can rub off on you and influence your weight; the people you interact with at work also have an impact,” says study author Professor Elisabeth Rula. We’re not asking you to un-friend all your heftier colleagues, you just need to start helping them to make the right choices. Try these: hold walking or standing meetings instead of sit-down ones; replace junk food and sweets in meetings with healthier snacks; take the stairs; invest in an office water cooler; start up an office sports league against other departments; and lastly, team up with one of the big guys and take him for a regular lunch time gym session.

4/ Stay clear of the speed trap.
If you eat too quickly, you’re asking for more flab. If you’re not concentrating and are eating in a group, you will subconsciously mimic each other’s eating style – and that means you’ll eat as quickly as the fastest eater. Even if you’re on your own, you need to slow down: a study in the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics compared a pasta meal being consumed fast (in less than nine minutes) and at a leisurely pace (22 minutes). Eating it faster meant you have an average 11% increase in kilojoule intake. Give yourself a full lunch hour, and drink water throughout to slow down the pace and fill you up.
Sacha Specker chases waves for a living. Jealous yet?
Score the World's Best Jobs

Some guys clock in with grins on their faces every day. Shouldn’t you be one of them?

By Kieran Legg and Matt McCue / P.93
YOUR JOB SATISFACTION IS CRITICAL.

People who are happy at work consistently outperform their unhappy peers, according to research from the University of Warwick, England. And a study in the journal Psychological Science suggests that a strong sense of purpose, professional or otherwise, can help keep you from dying early. No one is simply looking for a job. “All of us are searching for our life’s mission,” says career coach Joe Sweeney, author of Networking Is a Contact Sport. Is your vocation falling short? Here are the jobs you could be doing and how to get them.
Missing those boyhood days of building tree forts, plunging into dams and stomping through muddy creeks? Well, Pieter du Plessis does those things for a living as the course designer for the gruelling Impi Challenge. If you’ve ever hauled yourself up a slip wall or barrelled through a crawl tube, chances are you know his work.

Building obstacle courses has been this man’s life’s work. Starting in the army, he recalls cold mornings conquering the military’s gauntlets during training. Where most soldiers were thinking about lunch, Du Plessis was laying down blueprints for a career of devilishly challenging designs. From 1997, he was building obstacles for the Camel Trophy and G4 Challenge. “I then started building high-ropes courses, even a few jungle gyms at schools. Add trail running into mix and then you have magic.”

The Impi Challenge brings together all those passions by working with the terrain, merging the natural challenges of forests and water hazards with the the raw physical test of handmade obstacles (see the aforementioned slip wall).

“I love being the explorer, always finding new places,” he says. It’s not always a breeze, but when everything comes together it feels like the greatest job in the world.

**DITCH THE NEGATIVE THINKING**

Du Plessis is where he is today because he keeps his obstacles on the course. Doubt, worry, fear – that’s how you trip up attempts to land that dream job, says top local networking coach Karl Smith. “If you’re negative, your subconscious mind will come up with excuses not to put the needed time and effort into your job search.”

Instead of slouching into an office chair, Chris Goodwin slides in under a carbon fibre steering wheel. Instead of staring at a computer screen, he looks down a long stretch of pavement. As a test driver for the British car company McLaren, Goodwin, 48, spends his days redlining it on tracks from Spain to Bahrain to Death Valley.

One day he’s in a 570S, a car that goes from zero to 60 in 3.2 seconds, and the next, a P1 GTR, a R45 million, 986hp track bomber. Then he reports back to the engineers and does it all over again.

“A lot of our customers dream of having my life,” says Goodwin. “So I’m always introduced as Chris, the guy with the best job in the world.” Think you could handle a white-knuckle job like that? Goodwin thinks so. “Spend hour after hour at that speed” – often over 320km/h – “and you become very comfortable,” he says.

Goodwin always had an interest in cars, but he never imagined as a kid that one day he’d be living out his own Hot Wheels fantasy. But he worked on engines with his father, and later he left engineering school to pursue an opportunity to race professionally. In 2000, he jumped from the McLaren race team to the test-drive seat, and now he has the track to himself. It’s a gig so sweet the company CEO jokingly asks why they even pay him.

**PURSUE WHAT DRIVES YOU**

Goodwin wasn’t one of those guys who set his sights on the plum job – the engineer behind the wheel – from the very start of his career. He simply followed his passion for speed and auto mechanics. That’s always a good strategy: to create a truly rewarding career, spend as much time as you can in your “zone of genius” says Sweeney. This is the area in which you excel and can accomplish great things without great effort in a relatively short period of time.
From dense Sri-Lankan jungles to the lush valleys of the Himalayas, Alex Braczkowski’s work as a biologist and photography assistant has seen him venture off to some of the world’s most exotic and remote locations. It’s hard to imagine that just over a year ago the adventurer was wrapping up his Master’s degree, stressing about his next step. Whereas he had spent the past 15 months doggedly writing his dissertation at the University of Oxford, he now felt lost and overwhelmed by prospect of his upcoming job hunt.

Unexpectedly, his lifeline arrived in the form of an email from Steve Winter. The pair had met in 2012 when the photographer, who specialises in snapping shots of the world’s big cats for National Geographic, visited SA’s Phinda Game Reserve. Two weeks of chasing cheetahs and leopards in the park had clearly left an impression on the shooter, says Braczkowski, and now he wanted the biologist to help him track SA’s big cats again. He jumped at the opportunity.

Starting by shadowing and assisting the award-winning photographer, he picked up specialised techniques on how to snap perfect shots of the world’s wildlife. For the biologist, whose work had been focused more on conservation and research, it was an invaluable experience.

“There’s not a photography course in the world that could offer me this,” he says. The time spent under Winter’s mentorship nurtured a passion for photography, and as unexpectedly as the appearance of that first email notification, Braczkowski had found his calling.

A few weeks in South Africa turned into months travelling the world. Working alongside Winter, the biologist tracked and photographed big cats in India and Sri Lanka. “We tracked tigers on foot and from elephant back in Jim Corbett National Park,” he says. “We got images of a leopard on the
Up at the crack of dawn and off to the brewery - every day is happy hour for Josef Schmid. One half of the duo behind Ubuntu Kraal, the Joburg brewery in Orlando West which serves up Soweto Gold Superior Lager, the hospitality expert-turned-craft brewer says it never feels like a job. “It’s more of an all-consuming hobby,” he adds. “Work” is a healthy mix of prepping ingredients, fine-tuning the process and, most importantly, tasting the beer. The secret to landing this sweet gig? “Love beer, love the craft, work with your hands, and never stop learning,” says Schmid.

**FIND THE RIGHT INGREDIENTS**

Landing that coveted job may sound daunting, but if you break the hunt down into manageable chunks you will increase your chances of success, says Smith. Investigate two or three potential paths, looking into what new skills or experience you will need and start working on improving yourself. You won’t be able to brew up the perfect lager without setting foot in the brewery.

“**There’s not a photography course in the world that could offer me this**”
Jack Devine told everyone he was a US embassy official. In truth the former high school teacher was a CIA operative uncovering secrets on foreign soil. The gig often played out like this: He and his wife would arrive in a foreign city and invite local government officials over for a get-together. Devine used the gatherings to identify potential double agents, and once he lined someone up, he’d employ Bond-level espionage, feeding his intel back to the agency. One stealth technique was to install wireless transmitters in his informants’ cars so they could contact him on the road confidentially. Sure beats the conference room, right?

**Lay the groundwork**
The majority of Devine’s time was spent laying groundwork – in his case, that meant building trustworthy sources. Apply the same attitude to your career, Sweeney says. “You have to be willing to do the little things every day,” he says.

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He’s spent weeks watching the weather and finally the tide and swell line up. With a splash he’s battling the frothing waves, and then, a single golden moment, a window opens to capture what he calls the “unimaginable beauty” of the ocean with the click of his camera.

Since he was a child, Sacha Specker has never wanted to be anywhere else but in the sea. He spent his boyhood chasing and riding waves, swimming until his fingers pruned and ocean left his hair stiff with salt. But where kids can spend days frolicking in the surf, a man needs to make a living, and it was through his passion for photography that Specker has managed to stay in the water.

The photographer’s aquatic landscapes have been featured in the pages of magazines and have earned him a strong following on Instagram. While his day job keeps him in the studio, it’s his passion that draws him to the coast.

Specker began taking pictures when he was just 15, building his own waterproof casings to house his cameras. Initially, he photographed bodyboarders and surfers, but over the years his focus shifted to waterscapes and ocean textures. “Doing this with bigger and better cameras helped me capture images that are unique and mesmerising,” he says.

Success for the photographer is not about raking in cash, though he makes enough to pay the bills. “I feel the success is the part when I realise I am doing something I love and that it can be a career.”

**Know what you love**
The basis for choosing a rewarding career direction is recognising the topics, activities or environments that are most interesting to you, says networking coach Karl Smith. When you’ve identified these categories you’ll be able to trim down your job hunt to positions that offer opportunities you’ve been relishing.

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Everyone’s an expert until there’s a million viewers listening in. Yup, there’s a lot more to in-game commentary than shouting “Un-bah-lievable!” every two minutes. It helps if you’re a natural.

Matthew Pearce calls the plays on some of world rugby’s biggest clashes, and he wouldn’t have it any other way. “It’s never the same from one week to the next,” he says, “and the fact that my work has such an important role to play in how people enjoy their sporting experience on TV is a privilege.”

**It’s not about the degree**
Pearce studied Industrial Psychology and Economics before moving onto Marketing. It was his passion for sport and journalism that led him to the booth. Want a voice? Be prepared to start from the bottom and take advice from the pros, not the pundits, says Pearce. That’s something no degree can teach you.
The Alouette III chopper hovered over the schoolyard, its spinning blades kicking up dust as children jumped and waved below. For most of those kids, it was an exciting story for the dinner table, but for Omphile Mutloane it was the moment he knew there would be no compromise: he was going to be a pilot.

“I had no back-up plan,” he says. “There was no second choice. This was what I wanted.” Not looking back, he started training the first chance he had. Flight school took him from him a small village in the North West and placed him in the cockpit of a highspeed aircraft. Now, his average day at work – flying for the Silver Falcons display team – sees him take to the skies, cutting through clouds as part of the aerobic team, showcasing what the SA Air Force’s top military aviators are capable of.

“I get to fly a multimillion-rand, high-performance aircraft in close formation with other multimillion-rand aircraft. That’s pretty much my job, and I can’t get that experience anywhere else.”

Mutloane joined the squad after taking part in a series of fly-offs last year. Out of the eight instructors who did battle in the air (no missiles involved), he came out on top. He now flies in position number three, the left wing of Falcons’ tight formation, piloting one of the team’s iconic Pilatus PC-7 MkIIs. It was every man for himself during the fly-offs, but once part of the fold, Mutloane says, you need to be a team player to survive. Half of the time he can’t believe he’s paid to do this. “There are bad days, just like any job, but loving what you do, and for me that’s flying, that’s what will get you through it.”

TAKE ON THE TURBULENCE

Smith says setbacks are an inevitable part of life, and many can feel like they are getting in the way of landing your dream job. “The thing is, your happiness is largely dependent upon how you respond to those bumps in the road.” Those curveballs shouldn’t derail your plans – rather learn and grow from setbacks and change your worldview.
THINK YOUR WORKOUTS ARE HARD? TRY GOING A FEW ROUNDS WITH THE TOP TRAINERS AND ELITE FIGHTERS ON THAILAND’S GYM ROAD

BY T.R. FOLEY / PHOTOGRAPHS BY PATRICK BROWN
THINK YOUR WORKOUTS ARE HARD? TRY GOING A FEW ROUNDS WITH THE TOP TRAINERS AND ELITE FIGHTERS ON THAILAND'S GYM ROAD

BY T.R. FOLEY / PHOTOGRAPHS BY PATRICK BROWN
JOHNNY CASH IS BURNING

The almost-life-size portrait of the singer tattooed on Alan Belcher's left arm roasts in the midday heat, but the UFC champ hardly notices as he leans on the tricolour ropes that surround the ring. His sparring partner is late. And as the temperature rises under the open-air gym's bamboo-and-aluminium roof, so too does Belcher's impatience. And then... action. Belcher straightens as Lamsongkram “Lam” Chuwattana appears at the far end of the concrete floor. At 1.8 metres tall and 72 kg, Lam is a little shorter and 32 kg lighter than Belcher. But compared with Belcher’s 17 UFC victories, Lam’s 245 wins (51 by knockout) in Thailand’s fiercely competitive Muay Thai league make him the veteran. And from the look on Belcher’s face, he knows he’s about to get schooled. “That’s why I’m here: to learn from the best,” says Belcher as Lam jogs casually towards the ring, his high-cut polyester shorts doing little to hide the
bulging calves and muscled quads sculpted by decades of high kicks, low sweeps and crushing holds. The black T-shirt tied around Lam’s forehead flutters as he ducks under the ropes and hops into the ring.

“Muay Thai is a pissing contest,” says Belcher. He pulls on his gloves while Lam warms up. “These trainers are incredible, but they’re mean. Sure, they smile a lot, but behind those eyes they’re stone-cold killers. I like that.”

This is Belcher’s third trip to Tiger Muay Thai, one of seven fight houses that line Soi Ta-iad, a bustling thoroughfare on the outskirts of Phuket City known locally as Gym Road. Long a destination for globetrotting backpackers and European sunbathers, Thailand’s largest island is now attracting a new type of tourist, one who couldn’t care less about the raucous nightclubs and luxury resorts. Professional fighters, martial arts aspirants and fitness enthusiasts from all over the world – more than 20 000 a year – converge on this 1½-kilometre stretch of asphalt to trade punches with Thailand’s top Muay Thai athletes. (Check out the kick-ass vacations on the following pages for more top fitness retreats.) Belcher might be among the most famous of these pugilistic pilgrims, but like the rest of them, he hopes that a few weeks with the likes of Lam will transform him from a talented fighter into an unbeatable warrior.

“Let’s do it,” says Belcher. Lam guides a pair of pads over his arms and then smiles and yips, inviting Belcher to battle. Belcher smack the gloves, breathes deeply and enters the ring of fire.

**POUND EVERY ANGLE**

Muay Thai turns your entire body into a weapon. Fights are a blur of fists, elbows, knees and shins, which is why the sport is also known as “the art of eight limbs”. Good mobility isn’t just an advantage; it’s the key to survival. “You rotate your hip with each attack and block,” says Belcher as he pummels Lam’s pads with enough force to shatter bone. Lam absorbs each impact and then quickly repositions himself to guide the next strike.

Unlike ubiquitous disciplines like boxing and wrestling, Muay Thai is indigenous to a single country, making the art of pad holding a rare skill outside Thailand. “Nobody at my gym can do it like they do here,” says Belcher, breathing heavily as his kicks become increasingly laboured. “See how Lam dances around? He’s forcing me to kick and punch through full range of motion. You don’t see that kind of technique back home. Hell, you don’t see it anywhere but Thailand.”

Lam notices Belcher’s fading effort and pounces, demanding 20 more kicks. Soaked in sweat, Belcher plants his left foot, and begins swatting at Lam’s pads with his right leg; 5, 10, 15, 20...

Belcher bellows in exhaustion as he reaches his goal.

“I was getting cocky and lazy,” says Belcher as he limps to the corner of the ring, panting. Lam sheds his pads and follows, pouring water over Belcher’s head and rubbing ice into his ribs. “Neither of those lasts long around here,” says Belcher. “They get beaten out of you pretty quickly.”
The lessons are critical: fatigue is often in the mind and, more important, mobility is everything. “You can think of your limbs as levers,” says Brendan Weafer, director of coaching and nutrition at Epic Hybrid Training in New York. “The more you can extend the lever, the greater the range of motion you can move it through, and the more torque and velocity you’ll develop.” The result: a nastier kick and a faster takedown.

Muay Thai trainers have always been innovators when it comes to the mechanics of strength and power; they understand innately what science proves empirically. “But range of motion isn’t built solely through sparring and pad work,” says Lam. “You also build it in the gym by incorporating it into your workouts.” (See “Muay Muscle” below for four ways to do that.)

Scientists at the University of North Dakota agree. They found strength training to be as effective as stretching for improving flexibility. “But you have to lift with good form, which means lifting through a full range of motion,” says Weafer. In practice, that means sitting deeply into a squat, or lowering your chest to within a few centimetres of the floor during a push-up. It also means working your muscles in positions where they’re weakest. “That not only helps you build them up, but also teaches your body to recruit them more efficiently,” says Weafer.

You’ll also probably spend less time on the sidelines. “When you can move a joint through a full range of motion, other joints and muscles no longer have to compensate for it,” says Weafer.

Belcher reenters the ring and launches a flurry of elbows at Lam. Each strike begins with a complete turn of his hip and ends with a whap! against Lam’s pads. Then he loses momentum, throwing a punch-punch-kick combo that limps into Lam’s midsection. Lam bops Belcher on the head and yells at him. Belcher isn’t amused. He slams Lam with a full extension kick that sends him stumbling backwards. That makes Lam crack a smile.

“That’s it,” says Belcher, his intensity subsiding as he yanks off his gloves. “Let’s eat.”

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**MUAY MUSCLE**

Weave MMA moves into your workouts and conquer all adversaries — including yourself

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**DRAGON PUNCH**

**TARGETS** SHOULDERS + CORE

**BENEFITS** HAND SPEED + CARDIO

Grab a pair of light dumbbells and assume a fighter’s stance. Alternate left and right forward punches for 30 seconds. Repeat with shoulder presses and hook punches. Rest 1 minute. That’s 1 round; do 3.

**SPRAWL BURPEE**

**TARGETS** LATS + QUADS

**BENEFITS** STRENGTH + EXPLOSIVENESS + MOBILITY

From a standing position, push your hips back, squat, and put your hands on the floor. Kick your legs into a push-up position and drive your hips down. Return to a squat and jump up. Do 3 sets of 15 reps.
BALI MUAY THAI AND MMA

World-class waves and Muay Thai coaches make this fight school a must-visit for pugilistic soul seekers. Run by former Gym Road denizens, its training packages range in duration from a single class to one year.

balimma.com

ON THE RUN
An early-morning jog along Gym Road helps fighters warm up for a day of brutal training

KICK-ASS VACATION No.02

HINDU PUSH-UP AND ROLLING PLANK COMPLEX

**TARGETS** CHEST + CORE + HIPS + SHOULDERS

**BENEFITS** UPPER-BODY STRENGTH + HIP MOBILITY + TOTAL-BODY STABILITY

From a push-up position, raise your hips to form an upside-down V. Drop your hips and pull your body forward, raising your torso until your arms are straight. Return to the starting position. Do 4 sets of 10 reps.

Between each set, do a rolling plank: assume a push-up position with your weight on your forearms. Hold 30 seconds. Then rotate to your right, down, and on your left side, 30 seconds each.

MUAY THAI KNEE STRIKE

**TARGETS** HIPS + CORE

**BENEFITS** RANGE OF MOTION + BALANCE

Stand with your hands locked around the neck of an imaginary opponent. Simultaneously pull down to your right and thrust your right knee up (as if you’re striking him in the gut). Do 3 sets of 20 reps per leg.
WILDFITNESS

Trips to Andalusía, England’s Isle of Wight, Crete and Zanzibar emphasize honing your body’s natural movement patterns. Activities include rock climbing, barefoot running, tree hanging and other “primal” exercises. wildfitness.com

KICK-ASS VACATION

No.03

ATTACK YOUR DINNER

Every meal at Tiger Muay Thai is an exercise in extreme gastronomy. Drained from hours of sparring, pad work, strength training and mobility exercises, the fighters descend on the kitchen with zeal. Belcher slides 12 eggs from a serving dish onto his plate and mixes his soft-boiled protein into a mountain of steaming sweet potatoes.

Such unchained eating is new for Belcher. Last year, he decided to shift his focus from the middleweight to the light heavyweight class. With an upper weight limit of 93 kg, it’s more in line with his stocky body type and allows him more freedom with his food intake. Belcher now eats five or six meals a day to pack in kilojoules and feed his muscles a constant supply of nutrients. “The more muscle you have, the more fat you burn and the more food you must consume to sustain a high level of energy and performance,” says nutritionist Glen Tobias, who works with top UFC fighters. “But increasing your kilojoule consumption alone won’t cut it. You need to make sure you’re eating the right foods at the right times, with the right balance of nutrients, and, of course, that you’re doing it consistently.”

Belcher is the first to admit that eating this way isn’t realistic for most guys. “It isn’t even realistic for me back home,” he says. “I take a meta-approach to my diet, focusing on getting enough carbs, protein, and fats. Fighting is hard enough. Eating shouldn’t be.” (See “The Fighter’s Diet” for Gym Road’s top power foods.)

BREATHE FIRE

The next morning, Belcher meets with Brazilian jiu jitsu legend Olavo Abreu. The third-degree black belt is the head instructor of Phuket Top Team, a fight gym on the eastern side of Soi Ta-iad. Abreu greets Belcher with a hug. “I saw you knock out Rousimar Palhares in 2012,” he says. “Fucking amazing.” Palhares was a jiu jitsu fighter with a nasty habit of not letting go even when opponents tapped out. Belcher was the 2-to-1 underdog, but when the final bell sounded it was Belcher who prevailed.

“I trained to stay calm and find a way out of his holds,” says Belcher. “Breathing played a big part in that.”

We don’t normally associate fear with professional MMA fighters, but even the most ruthless among them suffer from the effects of panicked breathing, says trainer Steve Maxwell, a former jiu jitsu champion. It floods the body with stress hormones, reduces oxygen intake, accelerates time to fatigue, bottlenecks energy and increases muscle tension. In short, such breathing sabotages your performance.

The secret, Maxwell says, is to breathe through your nose, using your diaphragm to draw as much air as you can. That stimulates the vagus nerve, which calms your nervous system by counteracting the fight-or-flight response. “Once you learn how to breathe and remain calm, you can begin to master all the other elements of your game,” says Abreu. “That’s the secret to becoming a champion – staying calm and putting it all together.”
**Black Rice**
It has more protein than brown rice and higher levels of antioxidants, fibre and vitamin E than even blueberries.

**Virgin Coconut Oil**
It delivers powerful anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects, which may be beneficial for heart health.

**Sweet Potato**
High levels of vitamin C boost collagen production, essential for muscle growth and recovery after tough workouts.

**Chilli Peppers**
Capsaicin, which gives chiles their heat, has anti-inflammatory properties and can rev your fat-burning metabolism.
Secrets to True Satisfaction

Bringing heat to the bedroom is as much about your words as your actions. Before you turn the lights down, consult the last crib sheet you’ll ever need.

By Mike Darling, Julie Stewart and Laura Tedesco
Life doesn't get much better than when a naked, satisfied woman is sleeping in your bed. “Men think sex was great if they had an orgasm and their partner seemed happy,” says *MH* sex advisor Debby Herbenick. But women set the bar much higher. “For us, great sex means it felt good, it didn't hurt, you cared about our orgasm, and we felt a connection to you,” she says. Big difference, right? So we asked our trusted sexperts for their favorite intimacy-boosting strategies. Start here for a night neither of you will ever forget.
BE A CLITORAL CONNOISSEUR

Most guys know the little nubbin above her vagina, but much more lies beneath the surface. “The clitoris is huge,” says urogynecologist Dr Rachel Pauls. It’s 7.5cm to 10cm long and arcs like a wishbone underneath the lips. Spread the love: gently rub around her clitoris and press lightly on her labia. You’re doing it right if her skin swells and turns red. Then tease the nub. When you’re ready to enter, aim for the front wall of her vagina where the top of her clitoris lies. (Some researchers believe the famed G-spot is actually the top of the hidden clitoris.) Doggy-style sex can help you reach it. If you prefer missionary, elevate her butt on a pillow – your pelvises will rub together to stimulate the gland gently from the outside as you tickle it inside.

KISS HER. JUST BECAUSE

If you kiss or cuddle her only as a precursor to sex, she’ll see these displays as tools you’re using to seduce her, explains Donald Strassberg, a professor of clinical psychology at the University of Utah. And she may be right. “For many women, and even many men, it’s important that demonstrations of affection not be limited to foreplay,” he adds. So linger on that goodbye kiss in the morning or that neck massage while she’s driving. Bonus points for post-boink, pre-snoring affection – it gives you a unique opportunity to shore up your bond with her. In a Canadian study, partners who spent more time kissing, cuddling and talking after a romp reported greater satisfaction in the sack and with their relationship overall.

STREAM PORN SHE’LL ACTUALLY LIKE

Redefine what you consider a chick flick: studios such as Dane Jones (billed as “sexually explicit creative erotica”) and Nubile Films (“capturing the essence of sensuality”) are changing porn for the better with videos that emphasize intimate acts of foreplay and teasing, says Herbenick. And unlike old-school videos, they depict typical-looking women actually enjoying consensual, healthy sex with their partners. MakeLoveNotPorn is another great, couples-friendly resource.

TAKE IT OUT OF FIFTH GEAR

“I can’t emphasize this point enough,” says Gunaullus. “Women take a much longer time than men do – up to 20 minutes – to generate enough bloodflow to their genitals and produce enough lubrication for sex to feel pleasurable.” So if you’re touching her clitoris in any way, busting out a new sex toy, stroking her G-spot, or inserting a finger anywhere before she’s ready for it, you’re just grinding her gears. “Women aren’t able to experience the full potential of pleasure if you move too quickly – in fact, it could actually be painful,” says Gunaullus.

GIVE BORING THE FINGER

The more sensation the better, of course. “A few of my bisexual women friends told me that they were shocked by how few straight men used their fingers when giving oral,” says sociologist Jennifer Gunaullus. Stroke the vulva, tease the entrance to her vagina, slip your fingers inside, and touch her G-spot, all while working on her clitoral area with your mouth.

SHE SAYS “You don’t appreciate me enough.”

DO THIS Share your origin story. When a friend asks, “How’d you meet?” be quick to jump in, “Hearing your mate reflect on what it was like to meet you can be very intimate,” says James Cordova, a psychology professor at Clark University. So be honest and end on a high note – say, by describing the exact moment you knew you were hooked.

SHE ASKS “How does this dress look on me?”

DO THIS Yes, she’s fishing for a compliment, says Paul Hokemeyer, a therapist based in New York. “Respond by elaborating on the truth.” Tell her how great she looks, and then share it on Instagram and Facebook. Think to-the-point praise (“My girlfriend. Yeah, she’s super-hot”) or even self-deprecating hashtags (#IamNotWorthy).

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More women than ever are saying that they’ve enjoyed anal sex, says Berman. And here’s another reason to make anal your ally: a recent study by Herbenick found that 94% of women who’d had anal sex during their last encounter reached orgasm. What’s more, that number was higher than orgasm rates reported by women who’d had vaginal or oral sex (but no back-door blitz). If you’re certain your partner is up for it, Berman says, just remember these two key pieces of advice: take it very slow the first time, and use plenty of lube. Try Johnson & Johnson KY Gel Personal Lubricant (R46, Clicks).

Lasting longer sounds like a promise you’d find in your spam folder, but one product actually works, says Laura Berman, the author of *Real Sex for Real Women*. Promescent is a topical medication (R690, 1.3ml, takealot.com) that desensitizes the nerves, helping prevent premature ejaculation. Apply it to your penis 10 minutes before sex.
Simultaneous orgasms are about as rare as snow leopard sightings. But they’re worth pursuing. “Experiencing that pleasure, where you both lose control at the same time, actually builds up bonding hormones such as oxytocin and prolactin,” says women’s health expert Dr Christiane Northrup. To save your O until she’s ready for it, use your breath wisely. Just when you’re on the edge, slow down and take two or three deep breaths. As you exhale, squeeze your pubococcygeus muscle (the one you’d use to stop urine flow). This will bring you back from the precipice — otherwise, you may tense up and ejaculate, says Northrup. Practise when you masturbate — aim to bring your arousal from a 9.5 down to a 7 on a scale of 1 to 10, she suggests.

One thing worth trying: Pilates. Exercises that strengthen your lower abs translate to greater thrust. And if she joins you, even better: lower-ab strength helps her grip your penis harder and experience more-intense orgasms, says Pepper Schwartz, a professor of sociology at the University of Washington. Make it a daily session. New research from the University of Mississippi showed that for every 30-minute increase in moderate to vigorous physical activity per day, men were 43% less likely to have erectile dysfunction. If workouts shred your gut, even better. In a study in the Journal of Sexual Medicine, men who shed 5cm from their waist raised testosterone levels by an average of 58 ng/dl. (Normal T levels range from 300 to 1000 ng/dl.)
BE A TEASE
You love it when she makes a beeline for your package, right? Well, she doesn’t want the same directness. So start by massaging her neck, shoulders, and back, suggests Northrup. Then kiss her neck and earlobes while stroking her chest, stomach, and inner thighs. Do this for 30 minutes – or until she’s begging for sex. It pays off in the long term: one Canadian study linked caressing to better sexual satisfaction and a stronger relationship.

MAKE A SEX DATE
Sure, spur-of-the-moment nookie is hot. However, it’s a myth that sex should always be spontaneous, says Rachel Needle of the Centre for Marital and Sexual Health of South Florida. “Life is busy, and things can prevent you from being physically intimate with your partner,” says Needle. “Planning ahead can build anticipation and excitement.” Save your sex session on a shared calendar – bonus points if you label it with something that harkens back to one of your hottest previous romps. Then, as the time approaches, amp up the excitement with texts. “Start subtle with something like ‘I can’t wait to spend time with you later...’ and build up,” says Needle. Progress to something like “I’ll be home at 7:30. Will you be naked?”

SHARE YOUR TOYS
Play nice with her. New research from Canada shows that using the We-Vibe (R2 774, matildas.co.za), a vibrator designed for use by both partners during sex, helps men feel more intense penile sensations and a greater sense of intimacy. Here’s how to use it: she inserts one side into her vagina. It has a vibrating motor inside that you’ll feel with your penis, plus a motor outside that rests on her clitoris. Then have at it. Add lube if you need to, and try all your favourite positions – the toy is designed to stay put, says study author Erin Watson. Its C shape enables other creative deployments – for instance, it could be handheld during massage or wrapped around your penis during oral or a hand job, says Watson. Toys make great gifts, right?

TURN FANTASIES INTO NONFICTION
Time to tell her about your BJ fixation. “Assuming that your partner should just ‘know’ what you prefer sexually is a lovely romantic idea that just happens to be ridiculous,” says Strassberg. In fact, simply asking her what she wants in bed could turn her on more than ever. Need some conversation starters? A study in the Journal of Sexual Medicine found that 82% of women fantasize about having sex in an unusual place; just over half have fantasized about being tied up during sex, while 42% have thought about tying up their partner. Thirty-two percent have fantasized about being photographed or filmed during sex. Invest in a smartphone tripod.

PRAISE HER LIKE A MAN
One of Gunsaulus’s clients recently described how a former flame would compliment her curves, strength and sexual response - all that her body had to offer. “He loved her lower back and the ‘decadent’ way it curved into her ass. He loved touching, licking and resting his head there, and he named it ‘The Courtyard.’” Her confidence soared, and with it so did her libido. Get the message?

SHE SAYS “I need to know more about what you like and dislike.”
DO THIS Share your Showmax queues. Don’t freak: this isn’t the stuff Ed Snowden warned about. For couples, sharing is all upside. It’s a subtle way of conveying commitment: it says, “I trust you enough to reveal my daily life,” says Timothy Loving, a psychologist at the University of Texas.

SHE SAYS “I’m not sure where this is going.”
DO THIS Plan ahead... way ahead. Preempt this conversation by filling your calendar with fun stuff you like to do together, says DeAnna Lorraine, an LA-based relationship coach. Enthusiasm is key. If you’re just casual, keep the talk light: make it a game (“If we were to pick up and go on vacation right now, where would we go?”)

SHE SAYS “We used to have more fun.”
DO THIS Inject the relationship with a shot of adrenaline. Plan side-by-side activities that let you two connect – say, a weekend whitewater rafting trip.
24 WAYS TO SMILE THROUGH LIFE’S STRESS STORMS
Into each life, chaos comes: missed deadlines, loaded nappies, skipped workouts, blown chances. Use our simple strategies to chill without the pill.
01/ Your drive to work is so infuriating that you show up in a bad mood almost every day. You’re not alone: the average car commuter in SA wastes about 90 hours a year in rush-hour traffic, according to the Tom Tom Traffic Index (TTTI). Your best option is

Around 1935, when rat studies began to connect environmental pressures to health problems, people never used the expression “stressed out”. Instead, they’d talk about being “hungry” or “overworked” or “sick and tired of wearing this stupid fedora” – all problems with specific solutions. And that’s really the best way to think of stress now: not as a mountain too high to climb, but as a series of smaller hurdles that you can take on individually. We went looking for science-driven solutions to life’s biggest stressors. Ready to make your life calmer and easier? Read on

THE GRIND
You’re working your ass off, but the pile never seems to shrink.
The problem: you suck at multitasking. That might be because you have a penis — women tend to be better at juggling duties. So stop trying to defy your DNA and prioritise the jobs on your to-do list from most to least important. Then work on the top job exclusively until it’s done, says Mark Cropley, a professor of health psychology at the University of Surrey.

cycling to work: according to a study in the journal Preventive Medicine, car commuters are 13% more likely to report trouble concentrating than people who walk or bike to their jobs. If pedal pushing isn’t an option, then you’ll have to become a road scholar: the (relatively new in SA) traffic-mapping capabilities of Google Maps and Waze (free, iOS and Android) can help you determine your best times to travel in order to beat the road congestion. Bonus: start showing up at work early, and you might just raise your odds of pulling off the stress-busting tip to your immediate right.

Nonstop emails make you want to shoot your computer.
Stop treating email like a chatroom: constantly checking your inbox may lower your functional IQ by nearly 20 points, a British study found. So turn off the dings and check in four to five specific times daily, says David Posen, author of Is Work Killing You? Each time, knock your unread emails down to zero — either answering them or filing them for later — and then go back to work. You’ll do more and worry less: UC Irvine research found that working without the ability to check email equalled less stress.

You can’t stop thinking about work when you leave.
Clothes make the man... stress out. In a Northwestern University study, people wearing lab coats were more attentive to their work than those dressed in sloppy painters’ coats. The same thing may happen to you when you put on your job uniform. “You’re stuck in work mode,” says Cropley. So starting tomorrow, leave the office and change into an after-hours uniform, one that’s better suited to the gym, garden work or playtime with the kids. That simple change will help you mentally enter a new phase of your day.

Your credit card bill inches up faster than you can pay it.
Here’s your four-step plan for escaping the interest trap, courtesy of finance coach Gregg Sneddon. Do a stock-take of how much you owe; draw up a plan to pay them off, and pay the smallest one first; cut up your cards and make a decision to only spend cash; and once you’re in the clear, use your debit card only (just beware of the overdraft). If you have to use a credit card, pay it off in full each month and never draw cash from it (unless it’s in the black) as you’ll pay interest from day one. Go to thefinancialcoach.co.za

You put in the longest hours at your office, but nobody even notices.
We bet the cleaning guy notices — and wishes you’d get the hell out of his way. Sure, being seen working a little late sometimes can be good for your career. But the hard-working strategy can backfire: your productivity starts to plummet when you hit 50 hours a week, according to Stanford research. If you clock out at a reasonable time, you may end up accomplishing the same amount of work — and have more time to drink cocktails with beautiful women.
BODY GRIEF

08/ There’s this guy you know who seems to be getting older, rounder and a little slower... Your “friend” should admit that he’s lost a step and gained some kilos. “Accepting that you naturally lose muscle mass and fast-twitch muscle fibres as you age is an important step towards setting new goals,” says sports psychologist Barbara Walker. “Those who embrace a lifestyle of fitness - recognising that the value lies in enjoying the activity and feeling good afterwards - are more likely to stick to a programme.” Maybe that’s why races and lifting competitions have age groups. Whether your sport is cycling or CrossFit, sign up for a competition. Then, instead of trying to hit your old times (or squeeze into your old suits), just try to win in your age group. And if something starts to hurt, see a PT. Your body can’t take the abuse like it used to, old man.

09/ Your knees creak like a door in American Horror Story

Knee pain relief may begin with improved hip flexibility, says San Diego exercise physiologist Pete McCall. So do this workout two or three times a week.

1/ High Plank with Spider-Man Alteration

From a high plank position, bring your knees to the outside of your elbow. Pause, return to a plank and repeat with the other leg. That’s 1 rep; do 3 sets of 6.

2/ Glute Bridge

Push through your heels to raise your hips so your body forms a straight line from knees to shoulders. Pause; slowly lower. Do 3 sets of 12, resting 30 seconds between each.

3/ Lateral Lunge with Trunk Rotation

Step right, bending your right knee, and sink into a side lunge. Pause, rotate your torso to the right, and return to the start. That’s 1 rep. Do 8; repeat on your left side.

10/ You want to exercise and eat healthy, but you feel like you lack the discipline.

Get your bed examined. “When men are sleep deprived, they are biologically driven to put as much food as possible into their bodies to keep going,” says Daniel Neides, medical director of the Cleveland Clinical Wellness Institute. “And they don’t have as much energy to move.” In a Mayo Clinic study, sleep-deprived people took in nearly 2350 extra kJs a day (probably while they were yawning). Aim for seven to nine hours of shuteye each night. Want to crash but can’t? Keep reading.

11/ Your bed is where you lie awake and stare at the ceiling.

Life-changing shuteye begins an hour before bedtime, says sleep expert Christopher Winter. Starting tonight, that’s when you’ll shut off your TV, computer, tablet and phone. The blue light emitted by these slumber saboteurs can lower your body’s levels of melatonin, a hormone that regulates sleep, says Winter. If you can’t (or won’t) power down entirely, then dim the screens to their lowest setting and keep them at least 35cm from your face. That may temper the sleep-stifling effect, a Mayo Clinic study suggests. Then, when you hit the sack, forget about the objective at hand - slumber, that is - and focus on deep breathing. “If you try too hard to fall asleep, you never will,” says Winter. Use the 7-7-7 pattern: inhale for seven, hold for seven and exhale for seven until you drop off. Still suffering in the land of the conscious? Well, what’s on your mind, chief? If it’s a specific task - like a rent EFT you forgot to make or an email you need to send - get out of bed and tackle it right now. Sure, it’ll interrupt your time in bed, but by the time you return to the sack, you’ll have acquired some sleep-inducing peace of mind.

12/ Alzheimer’s has claimed one relative, and now you’re freaked it’ll hit you too.

“Your genes are not your destiny,” says Richard Isaacson, director of the Alzheimer’s Prevention Clinic at Weill Cornell Medicine. But you need a defence plan. First, learn a new language or instrument. In a 2014 Mayo Clinic study, people at risk for Alzheimer’s who challenged their brain delayed its onset by nearly nine years. Next, eat fatty fish and have your vitamin D levels checked. If it’s not up to par, take a supplement. Research links low D levels with increased Alzheimer’s risk, and higher omega-3 fat intake with decreased risk. Finally, sweat: cardio and weightlifting can help clear amyloids - proteins implicated in Alzheimer’s - from your brain, and a slim waist offers cognitive protection. “The bigger your belly, the smaller the memory centre in your brain,” says Isaacson.

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Working out doesn’t bust stress like before.
Mix it up with tai chi. Here’s why: this martial art’s slow, deliberate movements can bestow a monklike zen, say researchers in Switzerland. In the study, beginners who attended two hour-long tai chi sessions a week for 12 weeks were calmer and 41% less stressed after a mock job interview than those who didn’t take the class. (Nunchuks optional.)
One Day, Zero Stress
Hit a few daily milestones and you’ll be as relaxed as Buddha – without the big belly.

7 AM
Rise and Relax
Wake up 10 to 15 minutes early and start with a deep-breathing exercise while sitting on your bed. A peaceful morning will follow you into the day.

7:45 AM
Eat Your 21 Grams
... of protein. People who ate that much maintained lower heart rates during the work that followed, a British Journal of Nutrition study found.

10:30 AM
Peace Out
Productivity is best with 60- to 90-minute bouts of hard work. Then take a 15-minute meditation break to maintain your cool and improve cognitive function.

12:30 PM
Pop a Pill
A daily multivitamin can help ease feelings of stress, anxiety and depression by as much as 26%. Take it with lunch and you’ll absorb more nutrients.

2:55 PM
Walk with Colleagues
This is typically the least productive time of the day, but a walking meeting will energise you. Bonus: head outside to a park. Nature is a proven stress buster.

You and your wife argue about basic household chores.
In a Pew survey, equal division of chores fell just behind fidelity and good sex on the list of things that make marriage work. Discuss it over dinner; people may be more aggressive when their blood-sugar levels are low, say Ohio State researchers. Draft a clear set of expectations. It ain’t sexy, but over time, it can lead to more sex.
15/ Your wife hates her job, and you hate hearing her gripe about it every night. Dude, your gameplan is simple: make sure she knows you support her fury, says Pittsburgh psychologist Nancy Mramor Kajuth. When she’s under stress, she’s going to vent. But in a Harvard study, women reported feeling more relationship satisfaction (read: less stress) when their partners empathised with their negative emotions. It doesn’t matter if her gripes are reality-based or not. Let her vent; then say, “Babe, your boss sucks.” Now move on and enjoy your evening.

16/ Your best buddies live in other cities, and now you’re all starting to drift apart. There’s a reason phone chats with old pals feel awkward: men bond best over shared goals. “It’s like how guys used to get together to work on a car,” says Ronald Levant, a professor of psychology at the University of Akron. So find your engine to rebuild: it could be a Tuesday night Xbox tournament or a fantasy league for just your high school pals. Now you have something serious to (trash) talk about.

17/ The new dating apps like Tinder are based on looks. And you’re no Ryan Reynolds. Download the dating app Hinge (hinge.co). It puts the focus on your killer personality by pairing you with people you have mutual friends with on Facebook. “It shifts the emphasis from looks to common interests and goals,” says Zach Brittle, author of The Relationship Alphabet. Of course, you value brains and beauty. So update your profile pic so your gaze is pointed off-camera and you’re not smiling. OkCupid data suggests that this will make you more attractive to... your future wife?
**FLIGHT ACHES**

**18/ The thought of lost baggage gives you anxiety.**
Relax, pal. Read the fine print and you’ll be fine. All airlines in South Africa offer some form of insurance, though they might differ slightly in their categorisation of your stuff. For instance, while some will lump insurance for “baggage loss” under one heading - meaning you’ll pay more for insurance you might not feel you need - others will get more specific, providing separate options for valuables and devices. Don’t like planning? Agencies like Travelstart and Flight Centre will take care of it for you. Why the worry?

**19/ Delayed flight! Now you may miss your connection.**
A long line of angry passengers will be waiting to rebook at the gate. Stay away from them. Instead, call the airline. You’ll cut in front of everyone in line and increase your odds of snagging the last available seat on a connecting flight, says Zach Honig, editor-in-chief of the travel site The Points Guy. Still stressed? Look for a spa in your terminal. A 45-minute massage can greatly reduce your levels of the stress hormone cortisol, according to research from Cedars-Sinai Medical Centre.

**20/ Holiday planning sucks. It feels like you’re just deciding between tourist traps.**
Stop being a control freak. You’ll have a better time and more unique experiences if you keep your itinerary loose and flexible, says Mramor. Do this: pick one or two sightseeing spots, and once you’re there, ask around. Because who works at “tourist traps”?

Locals! So after taking your cheesy Leaning Tower of Pisa picture on day one, ask the guys selling over-priced gelato where they hang out on the weekends. That’s where you’ll go tomorrow.

**YOUR DUGS**

**21/ Your kitchen table has become a repository for mail, car keys and pocket lint.**
You need a clutter interceptor, says Lisa Zaslow, CEO of Gotham Organisers. Just inside your front door, install three things: a box or tray for mail; a corkboard for bills and letters that need attention; and a small basket or tray for keys, earbuds, and other random items. Then, every time you’re about to take out the trash, toss the junk in the curb-bound bag. “You’ll be more likely to stick to your new clutter-free habit if you piggyback onto something you already do regularly,” Zaslow says.

**22/ Your neighbour likes to crank AC/DC right about the time you like to go to sleep.**
Build some rapport so the guy starts thinking of you as a pal, says Marty Latz, author of *Gain the Edge!* Try this: knock on his door with a couple bottles of your favorite IPA and ask if he has time for a drink. Start with small talk (“You been having problems with garbage collection too?”) before moving to the real issue: “I wanted to chat because your music can be pretty loud sometimes.” Let him know you’d like to figure out a music schedule that works – maybe earlier in the evening, or while you’re travelling. As long as you don’t lose your cool, says Latz, he’ll probably work with you.

**23/ You love your new kid and all, but now your once-serene home is a giant playpen.**
Let us guess: the toy box is in your room. “The key is to spread storage all over the house,” Zaslow says. That way, you’ll actually use more of it. For the living room or den, use decorative baskets. In the front hall, hooks to hang a stroller and nappy bag. And in your bedroom – well, try to make that a toy-free sanctuary. The activity that makes babies is more likely to occur if you’re not stressed about the one you already have.

**24/ Your door sticks. A lot. It’s difficult just to open and close the thing.**

1/ **Identify the Problem**
Find where the door is rubbing against the frame. Big gap at the bottom? It’s probably touching at the top. The hinge you need to adjust is diagonal from the too-tight spot.

2/ **Cut your Shims**
Unscrew the hinge and trace the outline onto the cardboard from a six-pack or tissue box. Use a box cutter to carve out the shape; repeat until you have 10 hinge-sized shims.

3/ **Force the Hinge Out**
Reattach the hinge to the door and frame, using three shims to push it out on each side. Repeat using two shims for the door’s centre hinge. If it still sticks, add more shims.
Download the Men’s Health Personal Trainer App today

The Men’s Health Personal Trainer App is available for your iPhone and iPad. Get leaner, fitter, stronger and healthier today with more than 350 personalised training programmes for beginners and pros. Download it now for free!
Mix it! Match it!

ALL YOU NEED TO LOOK GREAT IS 15 KEY ITEMS, AND EXPERT ADVICE ON HOW TO WEAR THEM WELL. HERE'S YOUR GAMEPLAN

BY AZEEZ JACOBS
PHOTOGRAPHS NEIL ROBERTS

Gentleman's Cardigan

A cardigan can be the most versatile jersey in your wardrobe: wear it with a shirt, tie and chinos at the office or with a T-shirt and dark jeans afterhours.
Basic Sweatshirt

The sweatshirt is a style classic. Use it to add a modern twist to your work and weekend wear. This is a wardrobe basic that gets even better with wear. Go for a lightweight cotton version so you can wear it all-year-round, either on its own or under some layers.
More than just another investment, this is one of the most iconic things a man can own. This year, go for a slimmer silhouette and lightweight fabric, and break up the suit by wearing the jacket with chinos when there's a smart casual dress code. And don't forget your pocket square – it's just what you need to personalise your look.

Navy Suit

More than just another investment, this is one of the most iconic things a man can own. This year, go for a slimmer silhouette and lightweight fabric, and break up the suit by wearing the jacket with chinos when there's a smart casual dress code. And don't forget your pocket square – it's just what you need to personalise your look.
Stand out from the crowd by cuffing your chinos. Just roll the hem twice until it touches the top of your ankle. It’s a great look for summer – and it’ll look edgy with a pair of desert boots or high-top Chuck Taylors.
White sneakers. They'll never go out of style and they go with everything from chinos to boardies. Leather is the best material to go for, as it's easier to clean than canvas, and more versatile too.

All-White Everything

ARTHUR ASHE
R1 300
LE COQ SPORTIF
STAN SMITHS
R999
ADIDAS ORIGINALS
ARM BANDS
R120 TOPMAN
CANVAS-STRAP WATCH
R3 000 DW AT TREGER BRANDS

Daring prints aren't to everyone's taste, so play it safe with Breton stripes. They're perfect for summer and look great against jeans or dark chinos. Be wary of wearing them under a double-breasted jacket – you might look like you missed your trip on the Love Boat.

Breton-Striped Top

Daring prints aren't to everyone's taste, so play it safe with Breton stripes. They're perfect for summer and look great against jeans or dark chinos. Be wary of wearing them under a double-breasted jacket – you might look like you missed your trip on the Love Boat.
When going from day to night, you need a multifunctional outfit that’ll play along with you. Layering is key here – throw on multiple lightweight layers and top it off with a jacket like this one to help get you through any unexpected weather changes.

Smart Casual Jacket

When going from day to night, you need a multifunctional outfit that’ll play along with you. Layering is key here – throw on multiple lightweight layers and top it off with a jacket like this one to help get you through any unexpected weather changes.
Lightweight Shorts

Your shorts should be slim-fit and end just above the knee. Choose a pair in a neutral colour for easy matching with your T-shirts and shirts.

STOCKISTS

BEN SHERMAN
021 425 8998
COUNTRY ROAD
021 405 4300
DIESEL
011 630 4000
EDGARS
0860 692 274
GSM GROUP
042 200 2600
H&M
021 826 7451
KINGSLEY HEATH
0875 508 880
LACOSTE
021 421 0939
REPLAY
021 418 8507
STUTTAFORDS
011 879 1000
TOPMAN
021 419 5900
TREAD AND MILLER
0860 665 533
TRENNERY
0860 022 022
ZARA
021 446 8700
FALKE
021 951 2137
Looking dashing requires much more than perfecting your duckface and use of the Valencia filter. We’ve put together a foolproof plan equipped with the best tools to take you from oily, hairy and drab to matte, trimmed and irresistible.
1/ Extinguish Razor Burn
Shaving leaves your face more vulnerable to irritation, so solve the problem by finishing off with some aftershave. This gel has a watery texture and absorbs easily, giving you a feeling of freshness and comfort. Slap it on to soothe razor burn – plus, it smells just like the EDT.

**Bleu De Chanel Hydrating After-shave Gel 90ml**
R750
Edgars

2/ Say Hello to Scrubbing
This powerful scrub, with a high concentration of anti-bacterial salicylic acid, has around 2 000 exfoliating beads that cleanse deeply and washes away oil, dirt and dead cells to unclog pores and keep blackheads from popping up again. L’Oréal Men Expert Pure Power Scrub 150ml R90
Clicks

3/ Sort Out Stray Hairs
If you’ve got a unibrow or hair peeking out of your nose and ears, you best trim them before you start resembling a yeti. Plucking is time-consuming, so ask your barber to tidy your brows up when you’re next in. Or you could invest in this handy grooming tool that’ll get the job done without the fuss.

**Phillips Nose and Ear Trimmer R100**
Clicks

4/ Matte Out Your Shiny Forehead
Having oily skin doesn’t mean you shouldn’t use moisturiser. Skipping this step could lead to dry skin and, yup, even more oiliness. This particular lotion has green tea extract, aloe vera and hydrating chamomile. You’ll have a shine-free forehead and good looking skin in no time.

**Baxter of California Oil-free Moisturiser 120ml**
R320
House of Machines

5/ Detox Your Face
Most guys think applying a face mask means they’ll lose a lot of man points, but it’s actually the best thing you can do to keep your mug looking at its best. This mask exfoliates your skin and restores your natural skin tone. Use it with a face scrub to improve the cleansing process.

**DX Smooth Pro Series Deep Purifying Mask 75ml**
R60
Dis-Chem

6/ Get Sparkly Eyes
Dark circles and puffiness are signs of a rough night, even if you didn’t have one. Incorporate eye care into your morning routine so you can look alive. The complex of sugar beet, yeast and golden root helps reduce the appearance of puffy eyes, cooling and energising the area.

**Elemis Anti-Fatigue Eye Gel 15ml**
R440
Edgars

7/ Rock a New Do
A great hairstyle can sharpen your overall look, says Farren Greening, master barber at Barnet Fair. “For a modern yet classic cut, ask for clippers that taper from a grade one at the bottom to a three at the temple, then keep it longer on top.” It’ll look even better if you use water-based pomade, like **Jack Black Gel Pomade 80ml**
R570
Metro Cosmetics

8/ Get Whiter Teeth
Marc Sher, a dentist based in Cape Town, recommends Opalescence Go. It’s a ready-to-use kit with 10 disposable applications. “It’s easy to use and has almost no side effects, due the low hydrogen peroxide.” Go for the in-chair option if you’re looking for a seriously whiter-than-white smile, he adds. Opalescence Go from **R1 200** at your local dentist
Your Lucky Numbers

We find out how the fates have treated you

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of men who consider themselves lucky</th>
<th>Total amount of cash the average guy reckons he's found in his lifetime</th>
<th>Proportion of guys who went to a psychic and say the predictions were spot-on</th>
<th>Percentage of men who wear lucky clothes to boost their love lives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>R2 000</td>
<td>3 in 20</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage who say luck is largely self-made

1 in 20

Percentage of guys who've tried to swipe some luck by fishing coins out of a fountain

1 in 9

Proportion of men who always carry a lucky charm

The charm he's most likely packing

Word shrinks use for a fear of those freaky Fridays:

PARASKEVIDEKATRIAPHOBIA

1 in 20

Proportion of men who refuse to fly on Friday the 13th

1 in 2

Odds that a hold’em hand will be won by a good player with a bad hand

1 in 450 379

ODDS OF DATING A SUPERMODEL

14%

Proportion of men who won’t wash their socks as long as they’re winning

48%

PROPORTION OF SPORTSMEN WHO WON’T WASH THEIR SOCKS AS LONG AS THEY’RE WINNING

BRAD PITT

The man guys contend is the luckiest self-made devil of them all

44

Percentage of men who say Lady Luck has bestowed good parking karma on them

32

Percentage who consider finding money on the ground proof of their good fortune

MAKE YOUR OWN LUCK

To tilt life’s odds in your favour, treat luck as a skill, not a phenomenon. “The more people think of luck as something that can help them, the more likely they are to persist with challenging tasks,” says researcher Dr Maia Young, coauthor of a study in Personality and Individual Differences. Start by comparing down: whether it’s a financial setback or a professional drought, measure yourself against those who’ve fared worse in similar situations. You’ll focus on what your good luck has yielded, not on what your bad luck has caused you to miss.
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