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Photography **Glen Burrows** Model **Matt Morgan@WAthletic**

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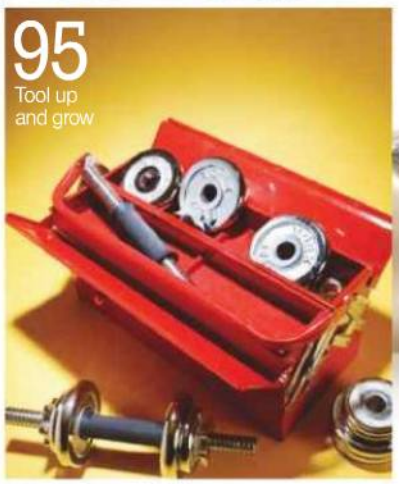

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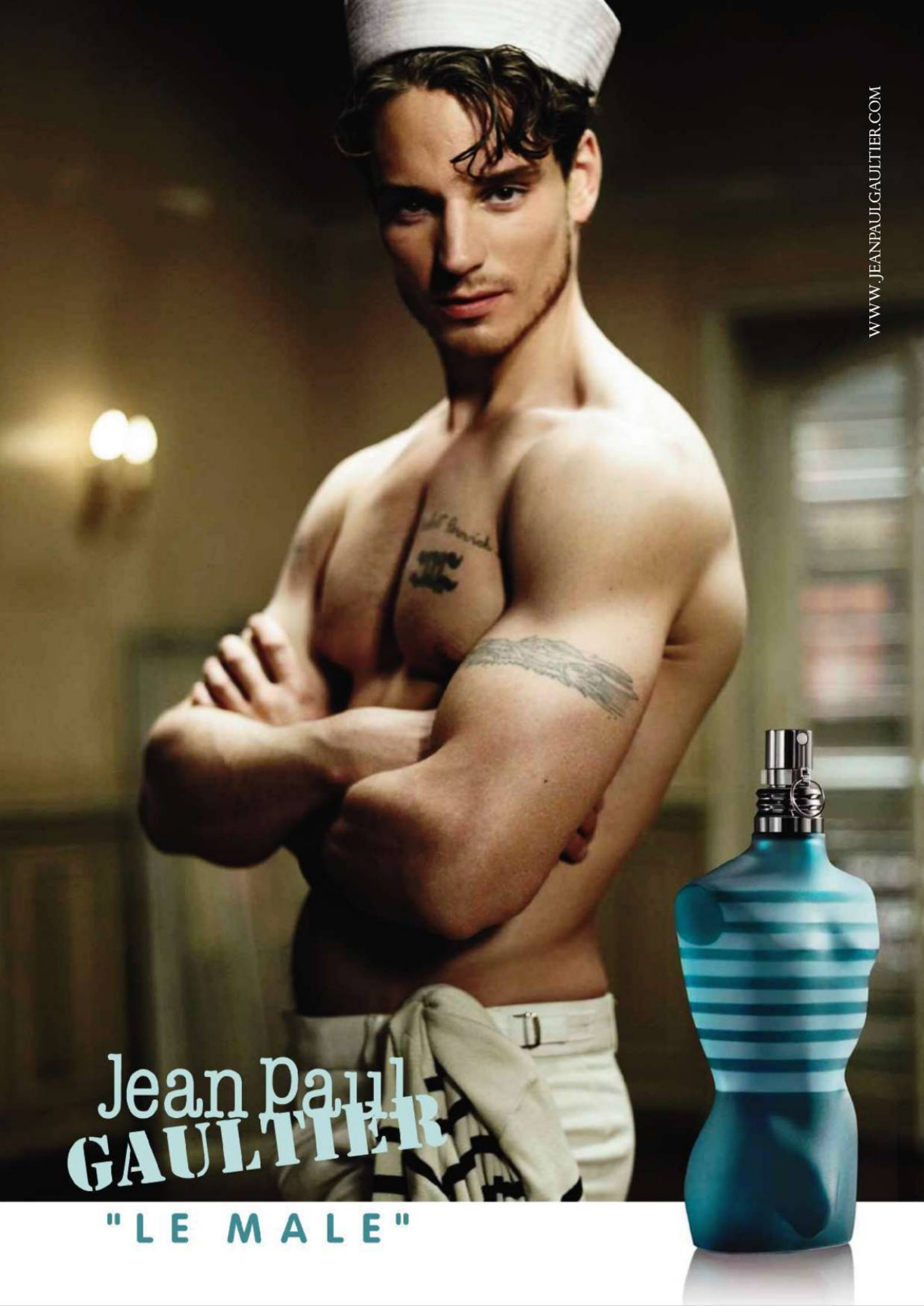
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The *MF*ers

Get back to work

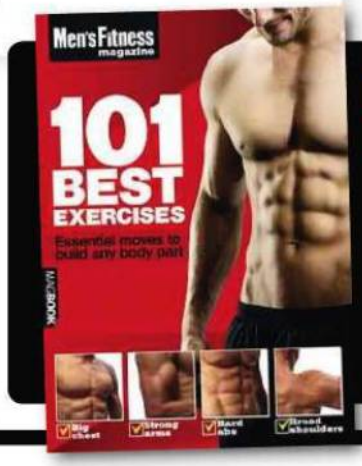
How the *Men's Fitness* team has been filling its time this month

Nick, digital editor
What I've been up to A lesson with 2009 RS:X windsurfing world champion Nick Dempsey. To read about it visit mensfitness.co.uk/links/windbreaker.
What I've learned If you turn directly into the wind, your sail will smash you off your board. You have to sail across it – upwind and downwind – to move forward.

Lucy, staff writer
What I've been up to Finishing off my usual workouts with 15 minutes of rebounding on a mini-trampoline.
What I've learned The absorption means there is almost no impact on the joints, while the instability makes it a great core, leg and cardio workout. It's good fun too.

Joe, deputy editor
What I've been up to Getting schooled in squats by *MF*'s new muscle expert, legendary strength coach Charles Poliquin. Look out for his advice in the January issue.
What I've learned To position the bar on my traps, keep my elbows closer to my body, my chin up and my eyes on the ground, and squat until my thighs are parallel to the floor. Apart from that I've nailed it.

Ben, junior writer
What I've been up to Winning promotion in Brighton's Pitch Invasion five-a-side league.
What I've learned Placing the ball with your instep can be more effective than blasting it, especially when shooting at low five-a-side goals.



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Did you know? You can reserve a copy of *Men's Fitness* **free** at any newsagent in the UK. Ask your newsagent for details.
Correction On p45 of *MF* October 2010, we provided an incorrect phone number for Club La Santa. The correct number is 0161 790 9890.

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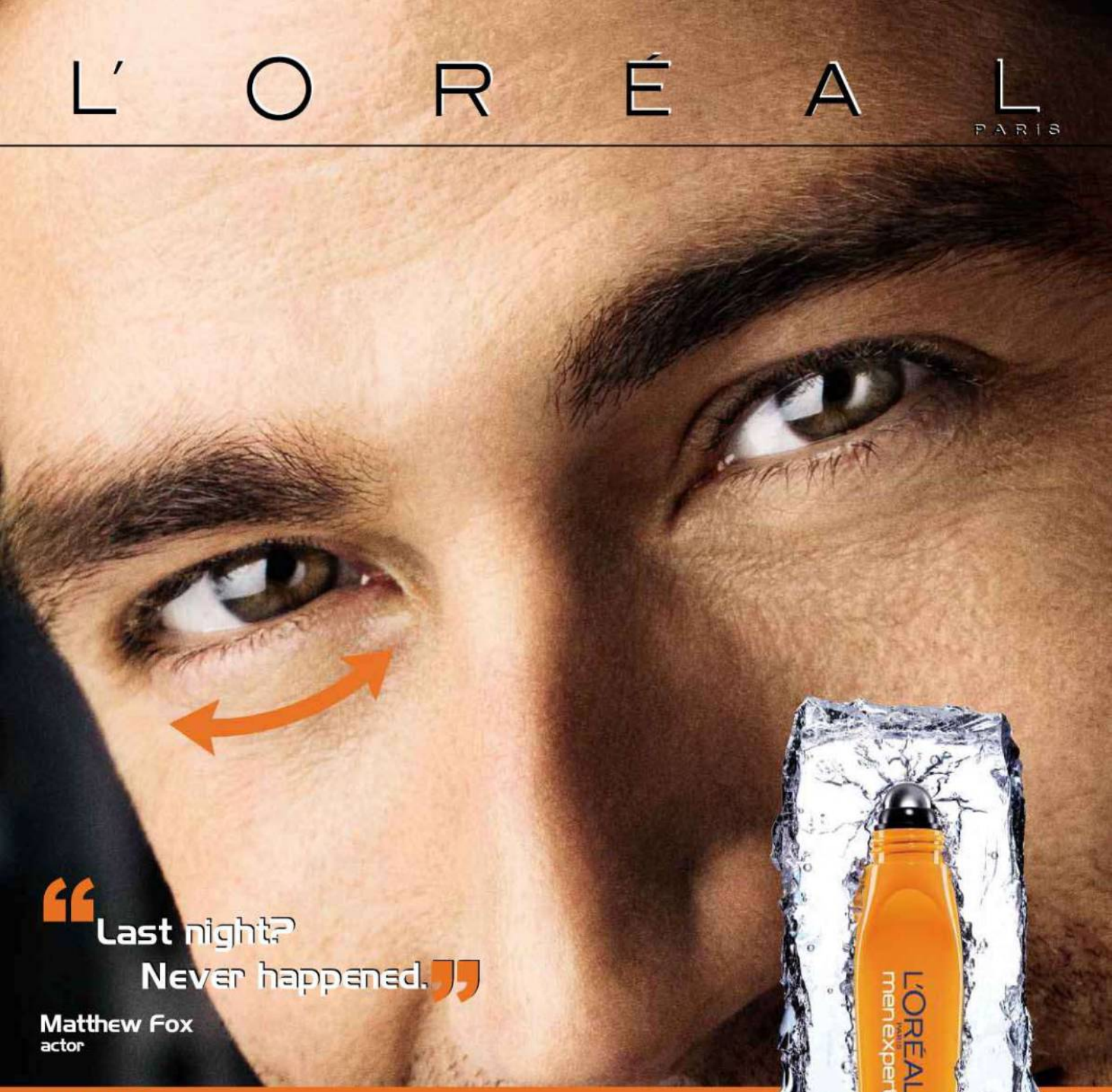

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6 RULES OF SHADOW BOXING

FIGHT SPECIAL

Get fit and stay sharp with these tips from boxing coach CJ Swaby

Shadow boxing is a great warm-up but it also enables you to work on your endurance and improve your fighting form

1 Feet first

Always keep moving. Good footwork is the hallmark of a good boxer; great footwork makes a great boxer. Move in every direction. If you're orthodox, move forward and to the left by leading with your left leg, and go backwards and right by leading with your right leg.

2 Mirror move

Stand in front of a mirror, not to watch how slick you are but for constant feedback. This is what any potential opponent will see, so look and evaluate where any weaknesses are so that you can eradicate them.

3 Keep your guard up

The art of pugilism is to hit without being hit, so don't focus only on throwing punches. Keep a tight guard and practise ducking and diving to avoid any imaginary counter-strikes.

4 Start slowly

Practice doesn't necessarily make perfect: only perfect practice does. When learning a new punch or combination, go through it slowly with flawless technique until you've got it nailed. Only then should you gradually increase the speed of execution until it becomes a reflex action.

5 Keep track of time

Shadow boxing makes the perfect warm-up or warm-down, but try to keep moving for at least three minutes, which is the typical duration of a round. The longer you can keep going past this point, on both the attack and defence, the better shape you'll be in if you actually get into the ring.

6 Switch speeds

Slow, steady-state shadow boxing can develop into slow and laborious punches, so structure rounds with bursts of explosive speed and power in the middle of slower-intensity period to keep your muscles firing.

Try super middleweight champ James DeGale's pre-fight workout at **mensfitness.co.uk/links/prering**

Words **Joe Warner** Photography **Danny Bird** Model **Russell Lee@WAthletic** CJ Swaby is a strength and conditioning coach, ABA boxing coach and founder of CJS Fitness (cjsfitness.com)

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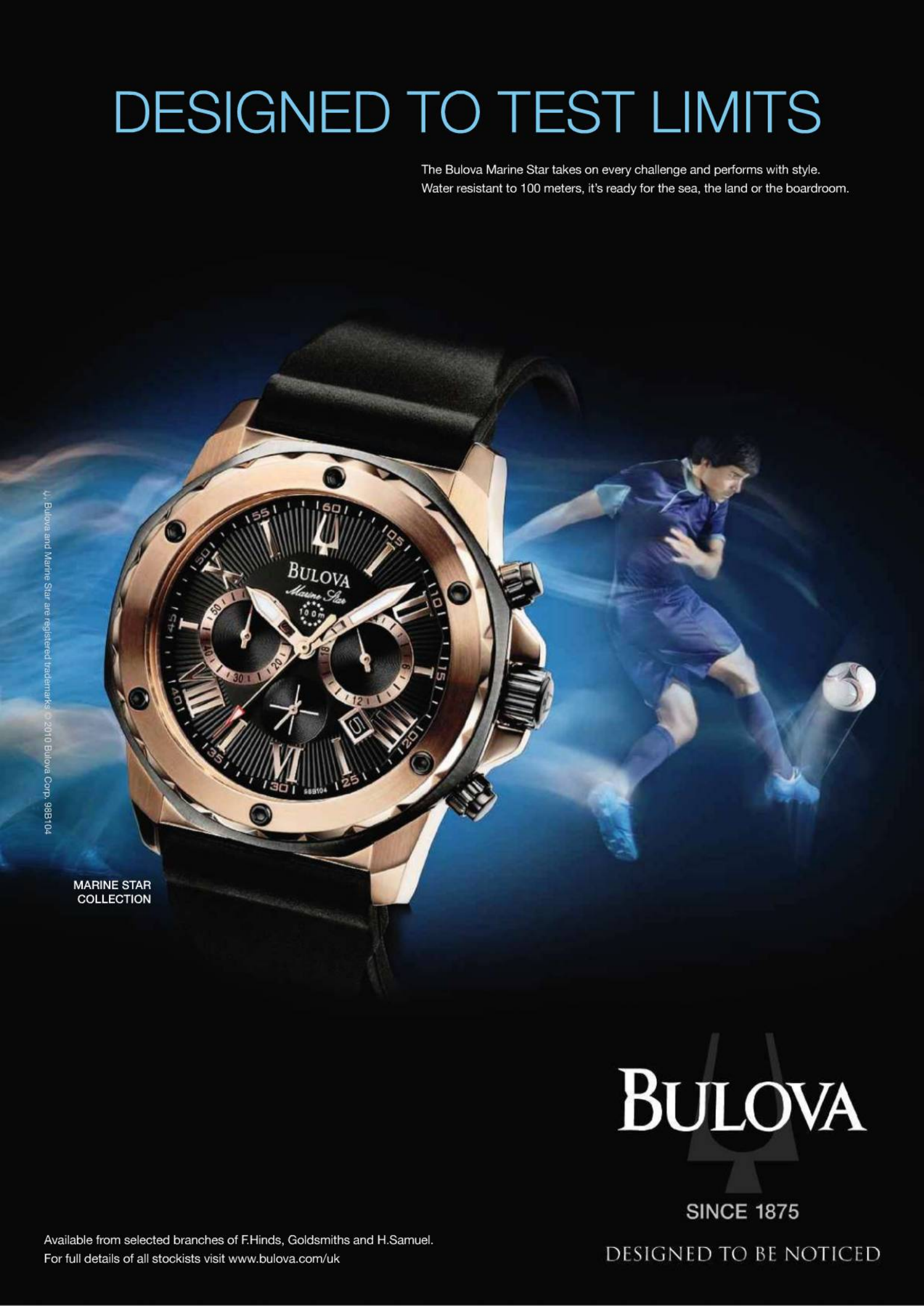

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5 ways to tame your appetite

Keep your fat loss on track with these tips to stave off sweet temptations

1 Don't keep it a secret Tell your colleagues and friends you are trying to lose weight and don't want to be tempted by tasty treats. They should stop putting sweet snacks under your nose, and they'll also be keeping an eye on you to ensure you stay on track. This can be a good thing: a study published in the *Journal Of Behavior Therapy* reported that having others willing you to succeed is vital in breaking bad habits.

2 Don't go hungry Eating more often doesn't sound like the best way to beat the bulge, but staying full is vital when trying to avoid calorific temptations. A study from Leeds University reported that hungry participants nearly always chose sugar-filled snacks when offered, whereas recently sated subjects opted for a healthy snack. Aim to eat six small meals a day.

3 Make your own snack jar Fill up an airtight tub with a variety of dried fruits and nuts (all unsalted) and grab a couple of handfuls whenever you feel peckish. Snacking on the fruit will satisfy your sweet cravings, while the nuts provide hunger-beating protein and fats to fill you up – not to mention giving you a huge array of vitamins and minerals.

4 Down a pint Of water, that is. What you think is a snack craving may actually be thirst, so drink a large glass and wait for 15 minutes. If the pangs disappear then you were just dehydrated. If your stomach is still rumbling, though, grab another handful of fruit and nuts.

5 Eat an apple before meals Do you invariably reach for dessert after lunch and dinner? Try eating an apple 15 minutes before your main course. Research at Pennsylvania State University found that subjects who did so ate 187 fewer calories during the meal than those who had apple juice or nothing at all.

4 bike tricks

Prepare for take-off with these sky-high stunts

1 Suicide no-hander Grip the seat with your knees and throw your arms behind you so you don't fall off. Swing your arms forward to regain your grip on the handlebars just before you land.

2 X-up Once airborne, twist the bars all the way around and cross your arms, then untwist them as you come into land. Stretch your legs so the bar doesn't bang your knees.

3 Superman Hold the bike in front of you and take your feet off the pedals. Bring your feet together and let the bike come back in to you. Bring your feet forward to land.

4 Tabletop When in the air push one of your legs and hips up to one side, forming a mid-air 'tabletop' with your bike. Bring it down fast or you'll end up eating dirt.

See thrilling footage of downhill cycling champ Gee Atherton at **mensfitness.co.uk/links/geeforce**

Words **Paul McNally, Joe Warner** Photography **Danny Bird**

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Whatever's on Jenson's mind, with the world's number one anti-dandruff shampoo* it's not dandruff.

8 classic gym mistakes

If you're doing any of these, you're doing it wrong. Stop it

1 Going it alone

Almost 40 per cent of men prefer to work out alone, according to a study published in the *Sport & Exercise Psychology Review*, but training with a buddy offers huge advantages. You won't be able to duck out of a session, you'll have a friendly rival to keep you motivated and – most importantly – you'll have someone to help prise the bar off your chest after one too many bench presses.

2 Not listening to music

If you've left your MP3 player in your locker, go back and get it right away. Listening to music while working out not only drowns out inane chatter from the more annoying gym-goers, it also improves performance and lowers your perceived rate of exertion. Research from the University of Wisconsin found that songs with around 135 beats per minute – similar to your heart rate during a session of aerobic exercise – were the most effective in making subjects feel positive while working out.

3 Going too heavy

Ego is an ugly thing, especially in the gym. It's always tempting to pick up a heavier weight, but if you get only halfway through a set of squats before ending up squashed flat on the floor then it's time to accept the weight is just too heavy and drop it down. Doing each set to completion is the best way to work your muscles hard and going too heavy can be dangerous if your form isn't perfect.

4 Doing the same thing week in, week out

The human body is remarkable in its ability to adapt quickly. That's why even if you make rapid gains in the first two weeks of a training programme, your progression may stall after a month: your muscles have adapted to the stimulus and can cope with this workout easily. Shaking up your training programme – whether it's the exercises you do, the number of reps and sets, the speed of each rep or the length of each rest period – is the only surefire way to keep making gains.

5 Training for too long

Testosterone levels peak about 40 minutes into a session, after which the stress hormone cortisol rises, something which prevents muscle growth. Limit weights sessions to an hour, including warm-up and warm-down. And keep cardio sessions high in intensity for greater fat loss and an increase in VO_2 max, according to a study in the *Journal Of Medicine & Science In Sports & Exercise*.

6 Not going all the way

You see it all the time – the guy on a bench bouncing the weight off his chest and up just a few centimetres before repeating the process. But moving your muscles through their full range of motion is more effective at promoting muscle growth because it means they have to work harder with every rep. And keep each one smooth and controlled.

7 Only working the 'mirror muscles'

Shoulders, pecs, biceps, abs and quads. These muscles are the ones we see most in the mirror, and that's why they're the ones many men focus on. But dedicating the majority of sessions to these vanity muscle groups at the expense of your upper and lower back, glutes and hamstrings results in muscular imbalances and injury, including lower-back pain.

> 'Train with a buddy and you'll have someone to help prise the bar off your chest after one too many bench presses'

8 Believing sit-ups will build a six-pack

Sit-ups are among the best exercises for building strong… hip flexors. What they won't do is carve a solid six-pack. For that, you need to do high-intensity cardio to maximise fat burn combined with compound lifts, such as squats and overhead presses, and abs-specific moves, such as planks, reverse crunches and hanging leg raises.

To stop wasting time in the gym go to **mensfitness.co.uk/links/timecrimes**

Words **Paul McNally, Joe Warner** Illustration **Rui Ricardo**/©FolioArt

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7 muscle-building set strategies

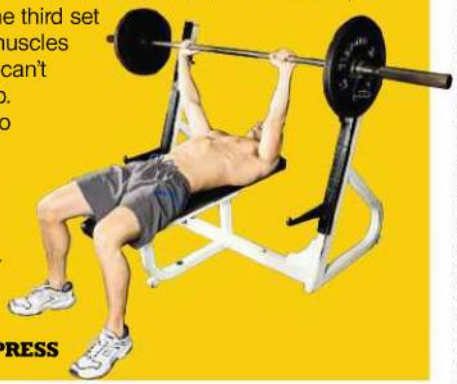
Adopting the right set strategy is major component of enhancing muscular size and strength, says personal trainer Ed Shanaphy

1 Straight sets

The most basic approach to weightlifting, straight sets require you to perform one exercise for a certain number of repetitions, usually eight to 12, followed by a short rest before repeating.

SUCH AS? Three sets of ten reps of the bench press is a typical straight-sets workout.

WHY SHOULD I DO THEM? The aim is to work the target muscle group to failure. In this case you would select a weight you can lift ten times for the first two sets, so that by the end of the third set of repetitions your muscles are so fatigued you can't do a single extra rep. Straight sets are also great for preparing a muscle group, and its stabilising muscles, for more advanced workouts.



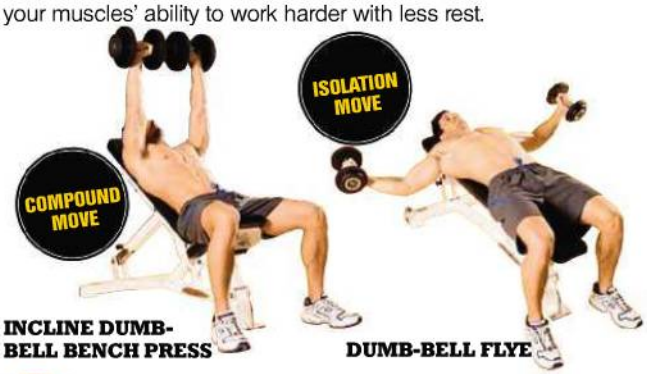
BENCH PRESS

2 Supersets

This approach involves targeting the muscles with two different exercises done back to back without rest.

SUCH AS? A typical chest-specific superset workout would be ten reps of incline dumb-bell bench presses (compound move) followed immediately by ten reps of dumb-bell flyes (isolation move), followed by a short rest. Repeat three times.

WHY SHOULD I DO THEM? Supersets are a great way to shake up your existing training regime: they shock your muscles into growing because of the increased workload and they allow you to work out harder in a much shorter period of time, improving your muscles' ability to work harder with less rest.



INCLINE DUMB-BELL BENCH PRESS

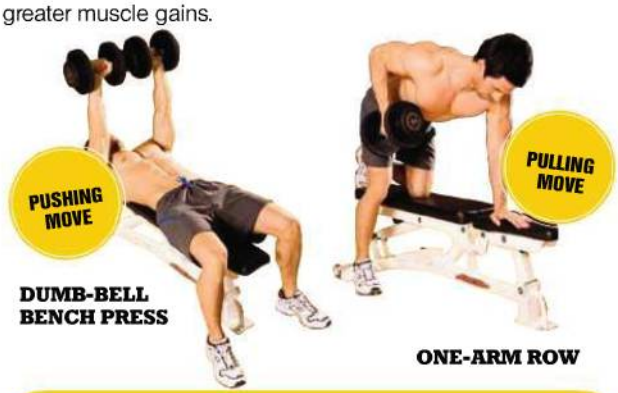
DUMB-BELL FLYE

3 Antagonistic supersets

A superset of two exercises that work opposing muscles groups, affording each group additional recovery time between sets.

SUCH AS? A set of dumb-bell bench presses (chest, pushing move) followed immediately by a set of one-arm rows (back, pulling move), followed by a short rest. Repeat three times.

WHY SHOULD I DO THEM? Focusing on different muscle groups provides a more balanced workout in less time and allows you to lift heavier weights during each set, promoting greater muscle gains.



DUMB-BELL BENCH PRESS

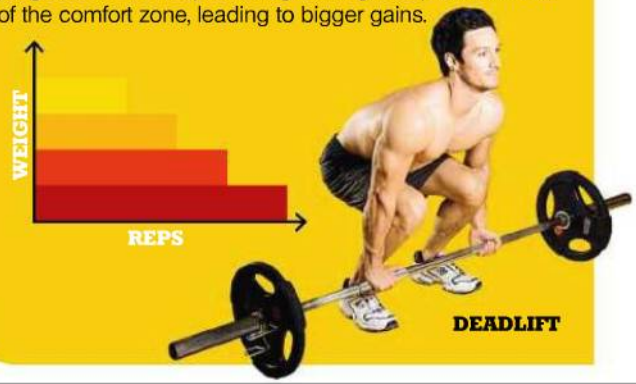
ONE-ARM ROW

4 Pyramid sets

A series of sets of the same exercises in which you increase the weight after each set but reduce the number of reps.

SUCH AS? To take the deadlift as an example: 15 reps of 60kg, ten reps of 70kg, eight reps of 80kg, four to six reps of 90kg.

WHY SHOULD I DO THEM? For larger muscle groups pyramid sets are a great way to add mass and strength because your muscles must work harder as the sets progress, which keeps them guessing and puts them out of the comfort zone, leading to bigger gains.



DEADLIFT

Try a strength-boosting superset workout we've devised at **mensfitness.co.uk/links/setmeup**

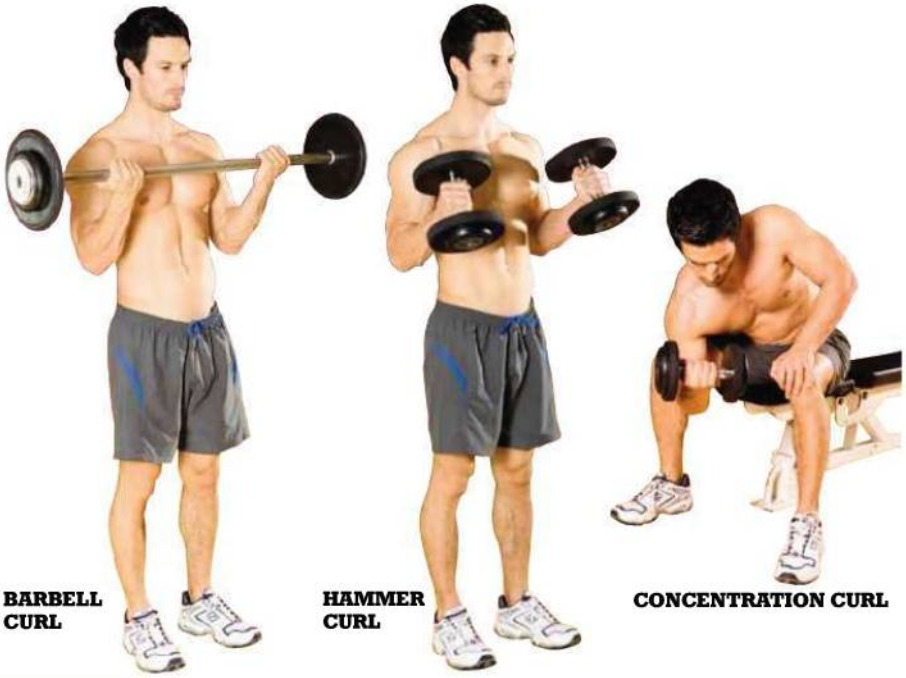
Words **Joe Warner** Photography **Tom Miles** For more on Ed Shanaphy visit get-fit-at-home.com or email ed@get-fit-at-home.com

5 Trisets

A triset involves doing three different exercises that focus on the same muscle group in succession without rest.

SUCH AS? Ten barbell curls, ten hammer curls and ten concentration curls is a biceps-specific triset. After this you'd rest before repeating it three times.

WHY SHOULD I DO THEM?
Trisets are great for recruiting additional muscle fibres to help carry out the workload because the muscle fibres you normally rely on become increasingly fatigued as the set progresses. This makes trisets good for building muscular endurance, when using a light weight, and muscular size and strength, when using heavier weights.



6 Staggered sets

These are like straight sets, but you use the rest period between them to work on a hard-to-grow muscle group that requires additional training, such as your calves or core.

SUCH AS? After a set of chin-ups, use your rest period doing calf raises to target muscle groups that require serious effort to grow bigger.

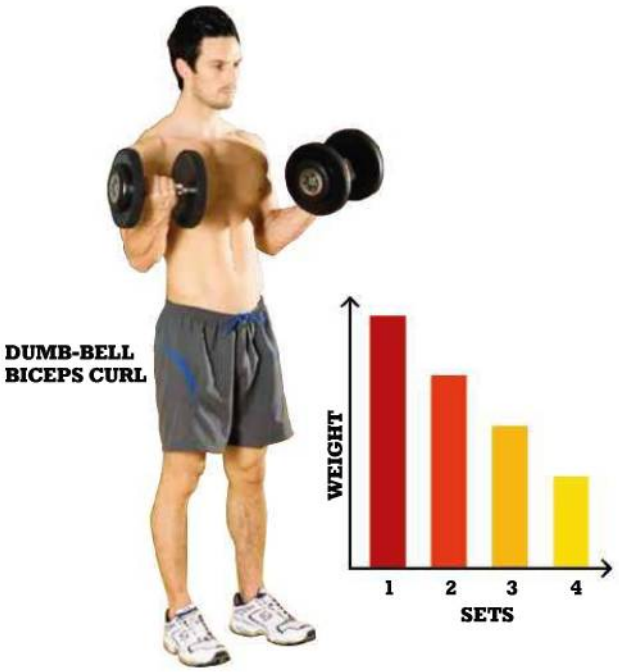
WHY SHOULD I DO THEM? Smaller muscle groups require greater stimulation for growth, and using staggered sets means you can work them even on days when not training them exclusively.

7 Drop sets

A series of sets of the same exercise in which you start with a heavy weight and lift until fatigued, then reduce the weight and do a new set to fatigue, pausing to rest between sets.

SUCH AS? Starting a biceps curl workout with 25kg dumb-bells, working to failure, then immediately grabbing the 20kg weights and continuing like this until you can't do a single rep, even with a really light dumb-bell.

WHY SHOULD I DO THEM? To work the target muscle to complete fatigue and damage as many muscle fibres as possible so that they grow back faster. Keep the weight drops small between sets and your final set should be with a weight about 20 per cent of the start weight. These sets really tax the muscles, so leave a good few days between sessions.



4 cable attachments

And why you should use them, according to personal trainer Shaun Stafford

Single D-handle

Benefits Most people have one arm stronger than the other, so training each arm individually with the D-handle allows you to detect and correct any imbalances between your dominant and weak sides. It also forces your core to work hard to keep your torso stable.
What else? The D-handle increases your range of motion, allowing you to work your muscles harder. It is also great for switching your grip to an easier position near the end of each set so you can do a few extra reps.

EZ-bar

Benefits Using this attachment targets the often overlooked muscles of the forearm, which are responsible for grip strength, as well as the main muscle group involved in the move you're doing. A strong grip translates into greater performance in many other moves, from pull-ups to deadlifts.
What else? Alternate between holding the bar with a palm-down and palm-up grip, and between a narrow and wide hand position to hit your forearms from every angle.

Straight bar

Benefits The straight bar can be used to replicate barbell exercises, and the nature of the cable machine means there is resistance throughout the whole range of motion, so you can make your muscles work harder during the entire move.
What else? As this attachment allows you to lift a heavy weight, always brace your core and have a slight bend in your knees to keep your body stable during each set.

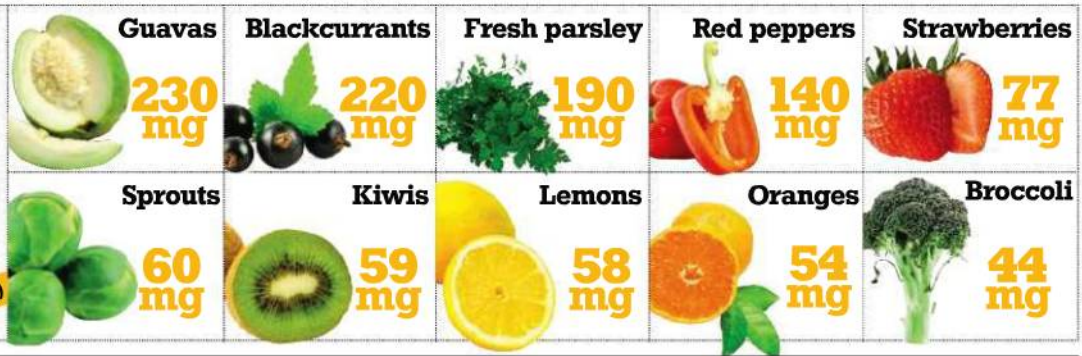
Rope

Benefits Using a rope attachment is great for building grip strength, and its flexible nature allows you to move through a full range of motion to work your muscles thoroughly.
What else? Wearing gloves can reduce the risk of grazes and calluses.

10 best sources of vitamin C

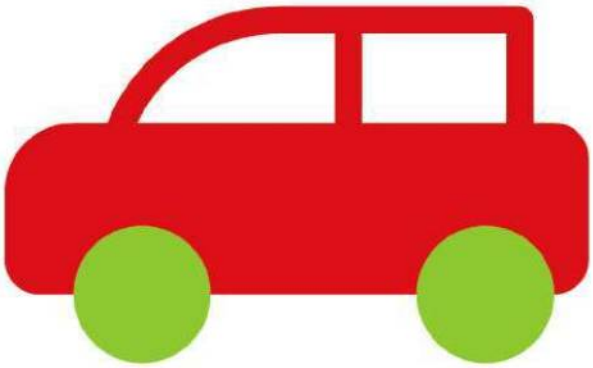
These foods help boost immunity, heal wounds and reduce bad cholesterol

(mg per 100g)

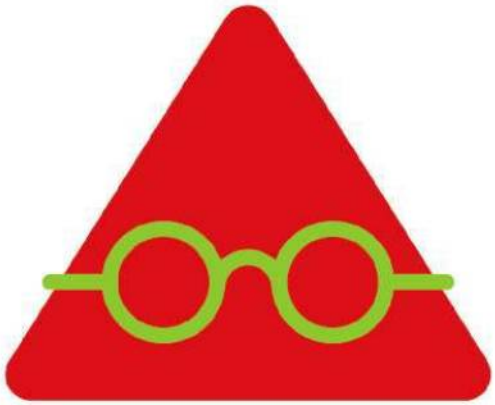


You'll find a total-body cable workout at **mensfitness.co.uk/links/cableguy**

Words **Joe Warner** Photography **Danny Bird, Shutterstock** For more on Shaun Stafford, go to shaunstaffordtraining.com



You take this for a regular service



Why not you?

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Mo Farah

The double European gold medallist who also set a new British 5,000m record this summer tells *MF* how he did it

Good training breeds confidence

I have been running at this level for the past four or five years and every year it's easier to deal with nerves. If you've worked hard in training and feel good, then it gives you a lot of confidence going into a race. I am getting better year by year and it's easy to stay motivated when you're getting close to your peak. And then there's the Olympics in London in 2012. That is all the motivation I need.

I didn't do anything differently

My training approach was the same as always, but over the years you learn more about your body and how it works. So I probably trained smarter. In the past I tried to push it all the time but this year I wasn't afraid to take it easy some days or have a rest when I felt I needed it.

This year went according to plan

I trained very well this year and my hard work paid off. I spent a lot of time training at altitude in Kenya, which helped, and my results this summer were based on the accumulation of the last few years of training.

Accept you're human

I've had some disappointing performances, but as an athlete you can't run well every single time you step on the track. Therefore, it's important to enjoy the good times but not get too downhearted when things don't go to plan. I had some disappointing races last winter but this is normal for all athletes. It's how you respond to the disappointment and how quickly you can bounce back that counts.

I can go faster

I broke [David Moorcroft's 28-year-old British] record for 5,000m at the end of a long, hard season [with a time of 12min 57.94sec]. So if I go into a big race a little bit fresher then I can maybe take some more seconds off my time.

Photography **Getty**

FARAH'S FASTEST TIMES

800m	1min 48.69sec
1,500m	3min 33.98sec
3,000m	7min 38.15sec
5,000m	12min 57.94sec
10,000m	27min 28.86sec

For news, views and exclusive interviews from the England team at the Commonwealth Games in Delhi, visit the Facebook page weareengland.org/facebook.

MASTER THE MAN MOVES

Prove your masculinity by nailing these infallible tests of manhood

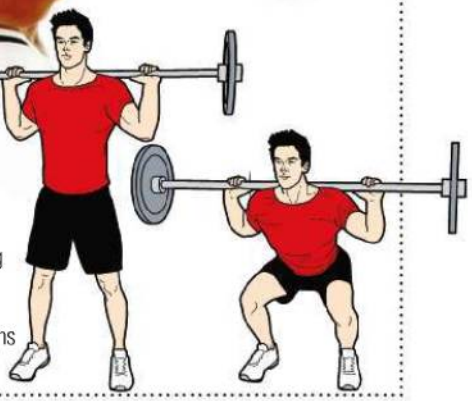
Sweep a woman off her feet

THE SCENARIO
Whether you're newlywed or want to make a tongue-in-cheek romantic gesture, there's nothing like sweeping your woman off her feet to make her feel wanted.

KEY MUSCLES
'Your hamstrings, glutes and entire back come into play,' says strength coach Jeff Willoughby. 'You'll also need good biceps strength to hold her in place securely.'

REQUIRED EXERCISES

'Work your posterior chain with squats for your legs and glutes, and back extensions for your back. Do some standing barbell biceps curls sets, some quickly and some slow and controlled to get maximum muscle-fibre activation, with palms facing up to replicate lifting up the girl.'



Open a jar

THE SCENARIO
No-one else can prise the lid off the jar and all eyes fall on you. Twist it off without breaking a sweat or reaching for a tea towel to win the plaudits.

KEY MUSCLES
'This is all about pure grip strength, which is determined by the muscles of your forearms,' says Willoughby.

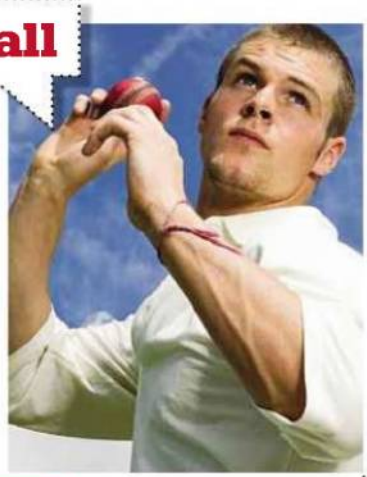
REQUIRED EXERCISES

'Pull-ups will work all these muscles, plus many more. Improve your grip strength faster at the same time by looping towels over the bar and gripping on to the end of them instead. You can also buy Thick Grips or similar products that slot on to dumb-bells and barbells to work on your grip strength every session.'

Throw a ball

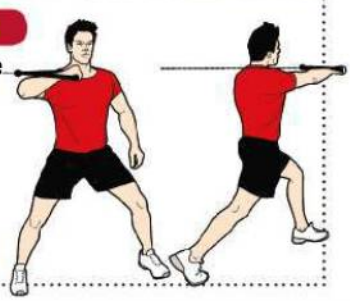
THE SCENARIO
You're walking across the park when a cricket ball lands near you after a monster hit. Get it back to the game with one huge, effortless throw.

KEY MUSCLES 'This requires good inter-muscle co-ordination, but If you have poor external rotator cuff strength then you won't be able to propel the ball back to where it came from,' says Willoughby.



REQUIRED EXERCISES

'External rotations on a cable machine and with dumb-bells will strengthen those crucial stabilising muscles of the shoulder, while the cable lunge to press (shown) will strengthen all the muscles of the legs, core and upper body and help the upper and lower body to work together.'



Words **Joe Warner** Illustrations **Acute Graphics** Photography **Getty, Shutterstock**

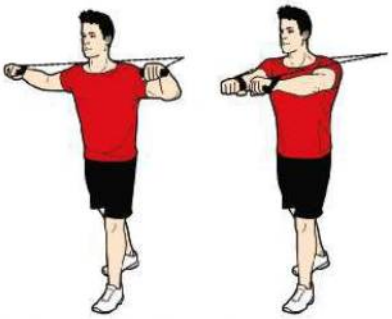
Push a car

THE SCENARIO
Breaking down is never good. Prevent accidents and save the day by aiding the stranded driver to safety.

KEY MUSCLES 'If you are weak anywhere between wrist and ankle, that will be a limit to your power output,' says Willoughby.

REQUIRED EXERCISES

'Do cable chest presses with the double-handed attachment. Stand with your back to the cable machine and push forward to straighten your arms, keeping your torso still.'



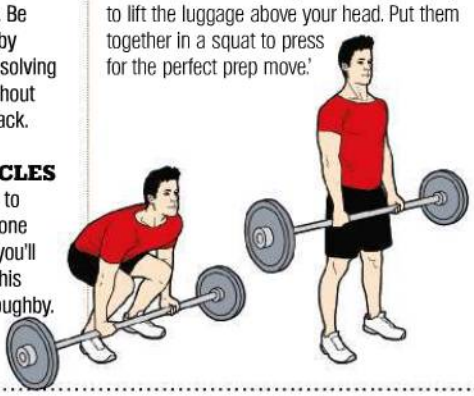
Lift a bag into an overhead locker

THE SCENARIO
On a crowded train a damsel is in distress, trying to wrestle her luggage into the overhead space. Be an instant hero by stepping in and solving her dilemma without breaking your back.

KEY MUSCLES
'You can't afford to be weak in any one area otherwise you'll struggle to get this done,' says Willoughby.

REQUIRED EXERCISES

'Deadlifts will strengthen the posterior chain muscles, which will get the bag moving from the floor, and overhead presses will enable you to lift the luggage above your head. Put them together in a squat to press for the perfect prep move.'



Carrying the shopping home

THE SCENARIO
A week's worth of groceries is stuffed into numerous carrier bags. You need to get them home to get into her good books.

KEY MUSCLES
'This revolves around most muscles, but especially the shoulders, arms and legs,' says Willoughby.

REQUIRED EXERCISES

'Farmer's walks are a perfect replica of this weekly chore. I love this exercise – the beauty of it is that is works absolutely everything. It improves grip strength, builds up the traps for keeping your shoulders in place, your lower back and core to keep your torso upright, and your legs and glutes. Anywhere you are weak, this move will help strengthen.'

Jeff Willoughby is a strength coach who has trained under leading coaches such as Paul Chek and Charles Poliquin. For more details, go to jeff-willoughby.com.

Fast food fixes

Turn tasty takeaways into fitness dishes with these simple alternatives

Takeaways are ultra-convenient, often satisfying and undeniably delicious, but they're also full of unhealthy fats, simple carbs and salt. If you love the odd takeaway but don't want the unhealthy side affects that come with it, keep reading as nutrition expert Anna Marsh reveals how you can fix your favourite fast foods into healthier – and tastier – treats.

1 Kebabs

The problem **The average kebab contains more than 1,000 calories, all of your daily recommended intake of salt and more than 1½ times your daily allowance of saturated fat. And that's before you factor in mayo and other sauces. The token addition of salad provides very few vitamins, making a kebab one of the unhealthiest fast food options out there.**

Fix it Make them at home. Alternate cubes of lean meat with cubes of vegetables on a skewer, drizzle with olive oil and lemon juice and stick under the grill. If you insist on getting takeout, dump the doner and switch to a shish kebab instead. Asking for chicken will reduce the quantity of saturated fat, while extra veg and salad will add more antioxidants. Ditch the mayo for chilli oil to boost your metabolism.

2 Pizza

The problem **The thick, doughy base is rammed with refined carbohydrates that send your blood sugar levels sky-high, in turn releasing insulin that encourages the storage of excess calories as fat. And the deep layering of cheese, like the array of meat toppings, is high in artery-clogging saturated fat. Then there's the salt. Too much can lead to high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease.**

Fix it Swapping a deep-pan base for a thin and crispy wholemeal one can dramatically reduce the calorie content. Combining protein with carbs will reduce the blood sugar spike, preventing the storage of fat, so opt for chicken or fish toppings. Skip the extra cheese and go for brightly coloured veg, such as peppers, sweetcorn and olives, which are full of heart-protecting antioxidants and an array of vitamins.

Words **Joe Warner** Photography **foodanddrinkphotos.com**

For two more healthy fast food recipes, go to **mensfitness.co.uk/links/aintnojunk**

3 Chinese

The problem Chinese food is often served deep-fried, with salty sauces and loads of simple carbs, which together create a recipe for a widening waistline. It often contains monosodium glutamate (MSG), a flavour-enhancing additive that some nutritionists say can have health side effects, although it's classified as 'generally safe' by the US Food and Drug Administration.

Fix it When choosing meat, swap deep-fried dishes for stir-fries, which are only briefly subjected to cooking fat and also usually include lots of fresh veg. Steamed dishes are also a better bet than those in thick and sticky sauces, which inevitably contain large doses of salt or sugar. Spring rolls and all other deep-fried accompaniments are best avoided.

4 Fish and chips

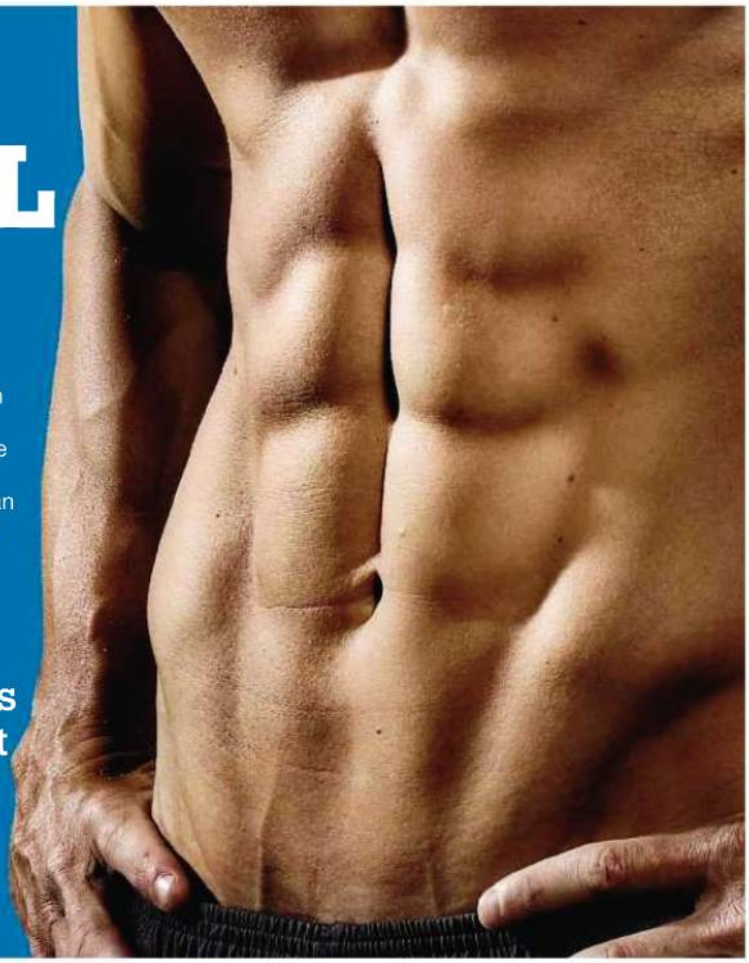
The problem Fish is a great source of protein and healthy fats, not to mention vital B vitamins and other beneficial minerals. But deep-frying it in vegetable oil and serving with a stack of salty chips quickly turns this takeaway into a high-calorie and high-salt disaster.

Fix it Going for grilled fish over deep-fried instantly eliminates the carb-heavy batter and allows excess fat to drip away. A good squeeze of lemon provides a dose of vitamin C, B6 and folic acid, which helps prevent heart disease. If you must have chips, go for a kid-sized portion. Fresh peas are far more nutritious than the mushy kind.

Anna Marsh is a personal trainer and nutritional therapist, and the founder of goodfoodtherapy.com.

CORE CONTROL

Is your core in strong shape or is it about to crumble? Find out by taking these three simple tests



'Your core muscles link your upper and lower body together and transfer energy, or power, between them,' says personal trainer Gavin Walsh. 'So this set of muscles plays a hugely important role not just during training and sport but also in most daily activities.'

The condition of your core muscles, and their ability to work both as a unit and with other stabilising muscle groups, will lead to further improvements in your fitness. Likewise, lacking strength in your core can lead to injury. Perform these three tests to make sure your abs are in tip-top shape so that you can continue to get the body you want, and not end up stricken on the sofa nursing another injury.

'Core muscles are important not just in training but also in daily activities'

Gym ball plank

WHY? This tests your core strength as well as the ability of your upper-body muscles to stabilise your body through your midsection.
HOW? Start by kneeling over a gym ball with your hands on the floor and your chest resting on the ball. Walk your hands forward, bringing your legs on to the ball, and keep moving forward until the tops of your feet are on the ball. Contract your abs and keep your hips from sagging so that your body is in a straight line from head to heels. Hold this position for as long as possible. Record your time and check it against the table below.
CAN'T DO IT? Build strength by placing your feet on the floor before progressing to the ball.

TIME	LEVEL
90sec+	Excellent
60-90sec	Good
30-60sec	Average
Less than 30sec	Poor

Medicine ball hold

WHY? This tests the strength endurance of your abs and deep core muscles.
HOW? Sit on a gym ball with your thighs parallel to the floor and knees bent. Hold a 5kg medicine ball above your head with straight arms. Lean backwards slowly until your torso is parallel to the floor and the ball is behind your head. Keep a natural curve in your back and hold this position until you can no longer control the weight.
CAN'T DO IT? Use a lighter ball and gradually increase the weight.

TIME	LEVEL
60sec+	Excellent
40-60sec	Good
20-40sec	Average
Less than 20sec	Poor

Gym ball glute bridge

WHY? This tests your core strength as well as the ability of your leg and glute muscles to stabilise your body through your midsection.
HOW? Lie with your calves on a gym ball and your back on the floor. Roll the ball towards you with your legs until your feet are flat on the ball. Your torso should be in a straight line with your thighs, and your knees should be bent at 90°. Contract your glutes, leg muscles and core and hold for as long as possible. If you start to struggle, raise your hips by contracting your glutes and abs harder to alleviate the load on your hamstrings.
CAN'T DO IT? Try placing your feet on the floor, rather than the ball, to build your core stability.

TIME	LEVEL
2min+	Excellent
80sec-2min	Good
40-80sec	Average
Less than 40sec	Poor

Gavin Walsh is a London-based personal trainer and the author of the fat loss manual *The Incinerator*. For more see gavinwalsh.co.uk.

Illustrations **magdaddy.co.uk**

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PROTECT YOUR BODY

Never miss a workout or match again by following physio Simon Lack's recovery and prevention tips

LOWER BACK PAIN

CAUSE

Lower back pain is most commonly caused by either carrying too much weight or not being in the correct position to manage the load safely. The lower back region is very robust, so problems typically result from lifting a weight with poor posture.

CURE

For acute pain rest, ice and compression is the best strategy for the first 48 hours. Once the symptoms settle you can start building up your activity levels again as the pain allows. If they continue, though, see your doctor or a physiotherapist.

PREVENTION

Keeping your spine in its 'neutral' position is the key to avoiding injury, especially during activities such as running or weightlifting in which a lot of weight moves through the region. A back that is overarched or overflexed will fail. Flexibility is often a restriction to maintaining a neutral arch in your spine, so it's worth working on any tightness in your hamstrings, glutes and hip flexors.

MUSCLE TEAR

CAUSE

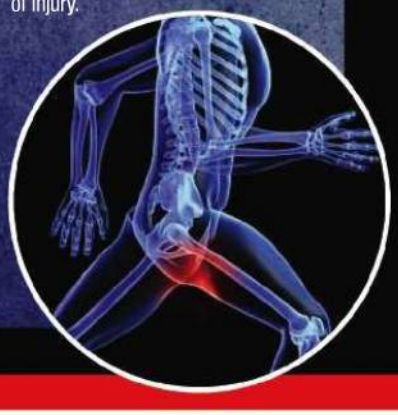
Put simply, if the force you put through a muscle exceeds its ability to absorb or dissipate it, it will tear.

CURE

Acute muscle tears are extremely painful but respond well to good immediate management. The well documented Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation (RICE) strategy works wonders for this type of injury by restricting blood flow to the region, which prevents further inflammation. Test the muscle after 48 hours under a low load, before gradually building up the amount of weight you ask it to bear. Good guidance is essential on getting back to your best so seek out a physio for a more detailed plan.

PREVENTION

A thorough warm-up is critical in avoiding torn muscles. Making the collagen within the muscle more flexible before loading will increase its ability to absorb force. You can achieve this through gentle exercise to increase your heart rate and dynamic stretching. Static stretching before exercise has been shown to weaken muscle fibres, which could increase the risk of injury.



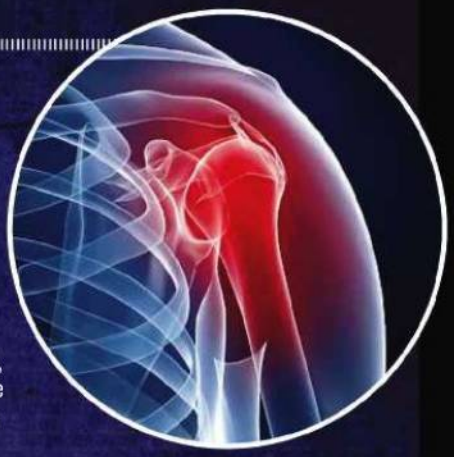
Words **Joe Warner** Photography **Shutterstock**

SHOULDER INJURY

CAUSE
The shoulder is vulnerable due to its huge range of motion and reliance on small muscles for stability. The most common cause of shoulder injuries is poor development of the rotator cuff muscles, but they can also be down to imbalances between muscles at the front and back of the shoulder.

CURE
RICE will limit the extent of the injury. Because the shoulder joint is so complicated it's best to seek professional advice so you can identify the exact nature of the injury and pinpoint the best way to rehabilitate.

PREVENTION
Poor posture – especially in the upper back – can lead to shoulder injuries, so keep your chin tucked in, your shoulder blades back and a neutral arch in your spine during all standing and seated exercises that involve the shoulders. Also ensure you work the muscles of your back and not just your chest, because unbalanced upper-body musculature can pull your shoulder girdle forward, leaving the rotator cuff in a position of weakness.



TENDON PAIN

CAUSE
Tendon pain can occur under two separate guises and differentiating between the two is critical for successful recovery. Tendonitis produces sharp pain that comes on quickly, is inflammatory and is caused by a bout of higher or harder activity than you're used to. Tendonosis is degenerative, comes on gradually and can either produce sharp or achy pain. It's caused by too much activity (overtraining) or a biomechanical fault.

CURE
With tendonitis, rest and ice is your best bet and the injury should settle down in a week or two. If you have tendonosis, you need to consider your training volume carefully and the chances are a better balance between training and rest is advisable. Having your biomechanics examined, both in the upper and lower leg, can make the difference between the problem going for good or coming back further down the line. A sport-specific physiotherapist is the best option.

PREVENTION
A well balanced training programme that incorporates sufficient rest periods after tougher sessions can help prevent these painful afflictions. Simple steps such as having the right trainers can make the world of difference so getting your gait analysed is a smart idea.

LIGAMENT SPRAIN

CAUSE
A ligament sprain occurs when a joint is forced outside of its normal range of mobility.

CURE
Stabilising the joint as soon as possible is vital, along with RICE, to help minimise the extent of the injury. Get a good brace to support the joint for the first four weeks and aim to restore normal movement once the acute pain lessens and the swelling dies down. Expect it to be a good four to six weeks before the joint is feeling anywhere near normal again.

PREVENTION
Strengthening the ligaments will reduce the chances of a recurrence. Incorporate some work on the Bosu ball into your sessions to improve the joint's performance on an unstable surface, and keep your training as functional or sport-specific as possible to build strength where you need it.

Simon Lack is a physiotherapist at Six Physio (sixphysio.com)

Ask the experts

***MF*'s resident gurus are on hand to answer your health and fitness questions**

I've just started seeing this girl who texts and calls me all the time. I like her but it's putting me off. What should I do?

She needs to know, and the sooner the better. Explain to her that while you really enjoy her company and look forward to spending time with her, you hate being tied to your mobile. Say you're on the phone all day at work and need to switch it off when you want to relax, so it's best to not text all the time. This won't make it seem personal and mean you will have far more to talk and catch up about when you meet up.

What's the deal with hemp protein? Is it as good as whey or casein for building muscle?

Advocates of hemp protein claim you need to consume less of it than you do with whey protein for three reasons: it has a higher concentration of essential amino acids; it's easier to digest, so it won't cause bloating; and the seeds provide fibre. However, there is scant scientific research to support its superior effect when it comes to building muscle. For now whey protein is proven, affordable and convenient.

How many dates should we have before we sleep together?

Three

I know the target for a one-rep max on the bench press is my bodyweight, but what about for the deadlift?

One-and-a-half times your bodyweight is a good deadlift one-rep max. Twice your bodyweight is excellent. Getting better at the deadlift is dependent on hamstring, glutes and lower-back strength. Try a combination of Olympic and Romanian (stiff-leg) deadlifts, hamstring curls with a gym ball and back extensions over a gym ball. Reducing any tightness in your hamstrings, glutes and lower back will improve your range of motion and reduce pressure on your lower back.

I need a mountain bike for weekend races, but have a tiny budget. What features are most important?

On a limited budget get a hardtail mountain bike (a bike with a standard frame) over a full-suspension design,

Health
Dr Steven Bradshaw is a medical doctor and writer qualified in all areas of medicine.

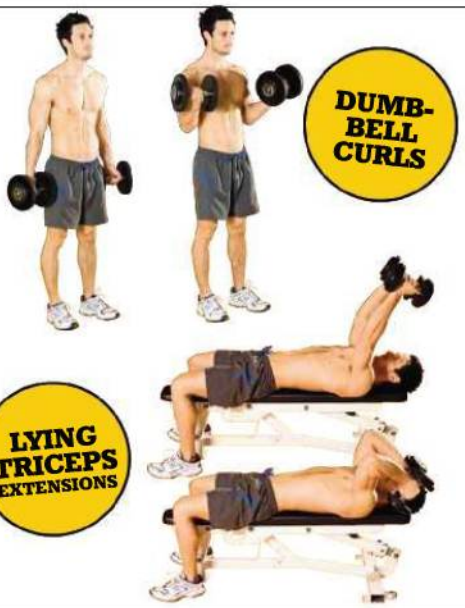
Nutrition
Dr Sarah Schenker is a nutritionist at the British Nutrition Foundation and an accredited sports dietician.

Cardio
Matt Hart is a personal trainer and runs TORQ Fitness Training and Consultancy.

Photography Shutterstock

What's the best arm-building superset?

To hit the biceps and triceps with maximum effort in minimum time, go for dumb-bell curls followed by lying triceps extensions. Do ten to 12 reps of the first exercise before moving immediately on to the second for the same number of reps. That's one set. Rest for 60 to 90 seconds before repeating, aiming for three to five sets in total.



because it'll be lighter and have better all-round components and fewer moving parts that'll need servicing. Riding a hardtail also builds a better skills base because it's less forgiving than a full-suspension bike, which has hydraulic disc brakes to offer greater stopping power, particularly in wet conditions. Most important, however, is to buy a bike with a correctly sized frame. Don't be drawn into purchasing a bike that doesn't fit, just because it's a good deal.

I've just had a great first date with a girl. How long should I wait before calling to ask her out again?

Three days is the rule of thumb, but I think it's good form to send a 'thanks, I had a great time' follow-up the next day (text or email), before calling a day or two later. Keep in mind that your date may fret if she doesn't hear a peep after the date. I also think it's nice to send a text just before you call to check that it's a good time to ring. Calling at an inopportune moment could be bad news, especially during this crucial early stage.

Do you really sweat out alcohol when exercising after a big night?

Only a tiny amount – as little as 0.1 per cent of booze-related toxins are removed in sweat, which isn't enough to cure your hangover. However, exercise is a great way of kick-starting the recovery process, especially outside where some fresh air will clear your head. Just remember that alcohol also causes dehydration, so if you do train you'll need to take on even more fluids than normal or else you may end up feeling worse.

What's a great time for running a mile?

Under five minutes

Why do protein shakes make me so bloated?

Bloating is quite a common problem with some protein powders and may be a sign that you are taking too much. It's usually recommended that you need around 1g of protein per kilogram of bodyweight per day from all sources to achieve positive protein balance depending on how much strength training you are doing. Another cause may be the type of protein you are consuming: whey protein is often a cause of bloating and gut discomfort, so try using whey protein isolate or micro-filtered non-denatured isolates, which are free from lactose and easier to digest.

I suffered bruised ribs during an MMA fight. How long will it take for them to heal?

Your ribs protect your body's major organs but there is little soft tissue to cushion a direct blow to the bones themselves. The ribs move during every breath, and can be painful when yawning, coughing or sneezing. Most bruising will be better within six weeks of the injury. Any soft tissue caught between a rock (your ribs) and a hard place (your opponent) will also be bruised and may take six weeks to settle. If you return to MMA too soon and suffer the same injury this may delay your recovery, so err on the side of caution.

Muscle Jason Anderson is a fitness expert and director of Movement3 (movement3.co.uk).

Women Sue Ostler is a sex and relationships expert and the author of *Relationships That Rock*. For more info, visit flirtdiva.com.

Physio Richard Norris is a physiotherapist at The Physiotherapy Centre in Liverpool. Visit thephysiotherapycentre.com.

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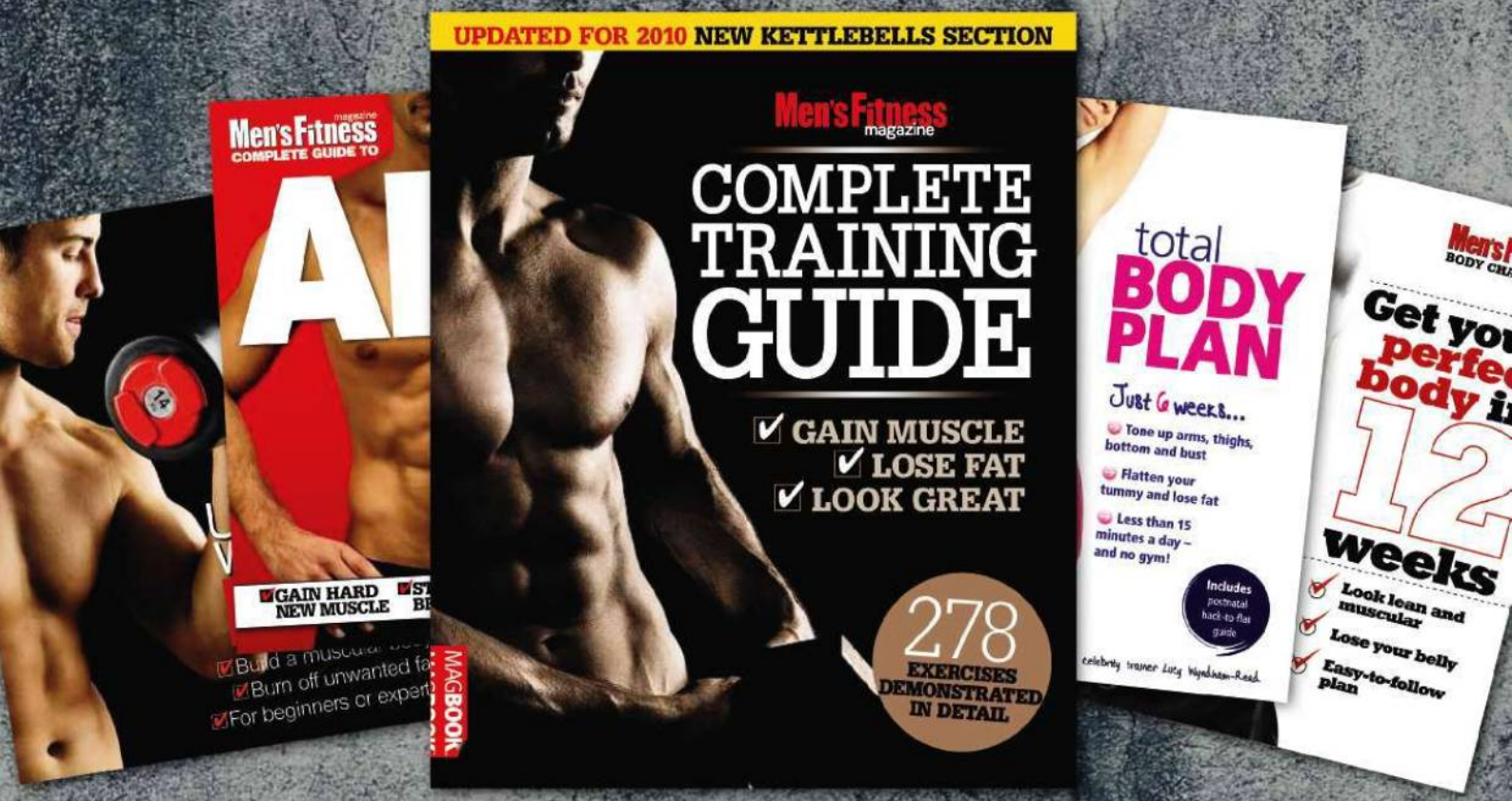

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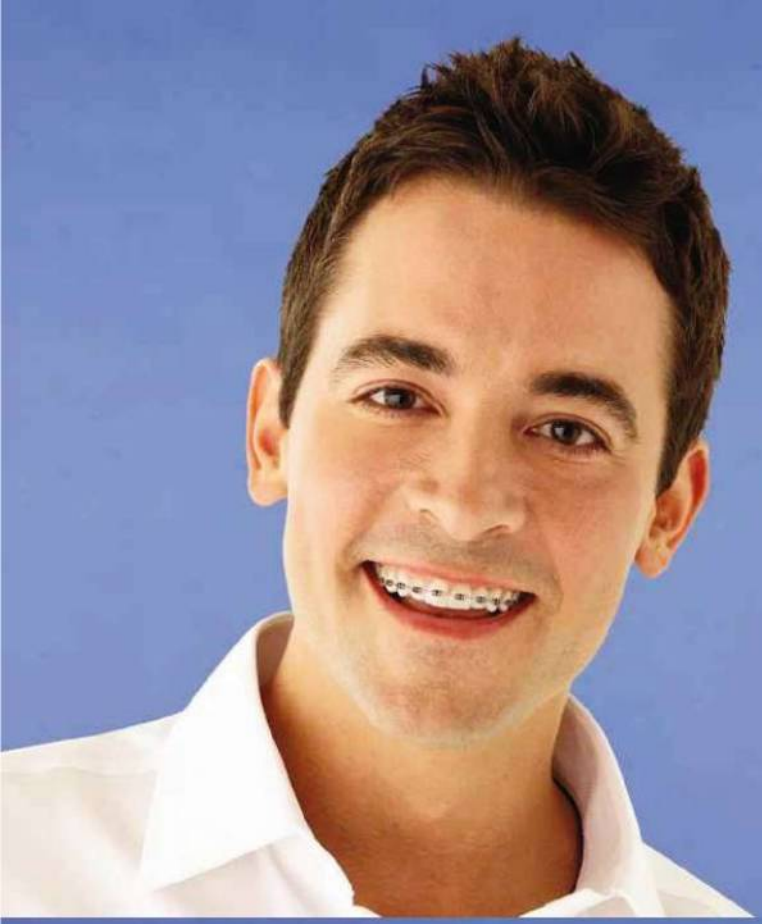

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MF CYCLES THE...

SEA-TO-SEA

A new 274km sea-to-sea cycle route from northwest to northeast England has just opened. *MF*'s Jon Lipsey got in the saddle to take in the route's sights, steep climbs and sheep

'There's nothing on either side of me except coarse grass, rocks and sheep, some of whom scamper away when they see me coming'

MF's Jon follows some sheep after tackling High Side hill

Photography **David Klein**

The best thing about Britain's new sea-to-sea cycle route, which starts at Morecambe in the northwest of England and ends 274km later at Bridlington in the northeast, is the scenery. You sweep through dramatic, treeless moors and wind your way along narrow country lanes that connect quaint and unspoilt hamlets. It's man and bike in glorious harmony with some of the most picturesque views these isles have to offer.

But before you get to all of that you've got to make sure you don't take a wrong turn 5km into the ride, as I've just done, and find yourself doing an impromptu tour of Lancaster's housing estates.

The route I've just strayed from is called the Way Of The Roses because it goes from Lancashire

Sunny Morecambe Bay: only 274km to go

to Yorkshire (clever, eh?) and has been designed by Sustrans, the organisation responsible for creating rides that allow cyclists to explore the country via a network of minor roads and cycle paths. Each of their routes has its own map detailing your progress, the relief of the land and places of interest. They also tell you where you can find local pubs and cafés. And that's the difference between this type of ride and a race. You can do it as a challenge and get to the end as quickly as possible, or you can take your time and drink in more than just the views.

I'll be taking two days to complete the ride, clocking up 129km from Morecambe to Ripon on day one and 145km from Ripon to Bridlington on day two so, sadly, I won't have time for many pub pit stops.

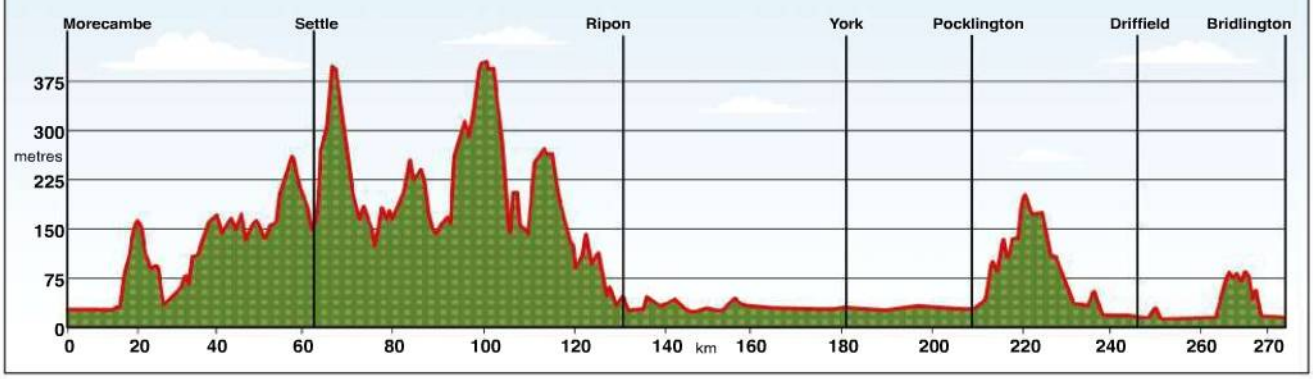
Onwards and upwards

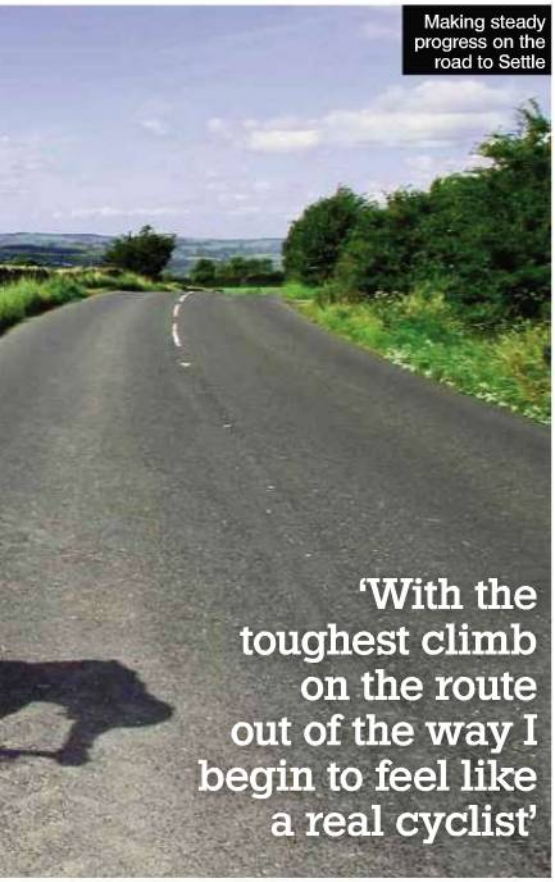
Provided you stick to the route, much of the first 10km is on a cycle path that hugs the river Lune and takes you into open countryside. I make a confident start and attack the first hilly section that rises 150m in a couple of kilometres. For the next 30km I pedal up and down (but mainly up) the Pennines with the dense Forest of Bowland sprawling to my right.

The cosy grey-stone market town of Settle, 55km in, offers a well-timed lunch stop and after refuelling on a hefty baked potato I ask the waitress for directions. The next section is supposed to be the hardest of the route, gaining 250m in height in about 3km, so I want to make sure I know where I'm going. Unfortunately her sense of direction is even worse than mine and

Jon savours every last drop of water from his bottle

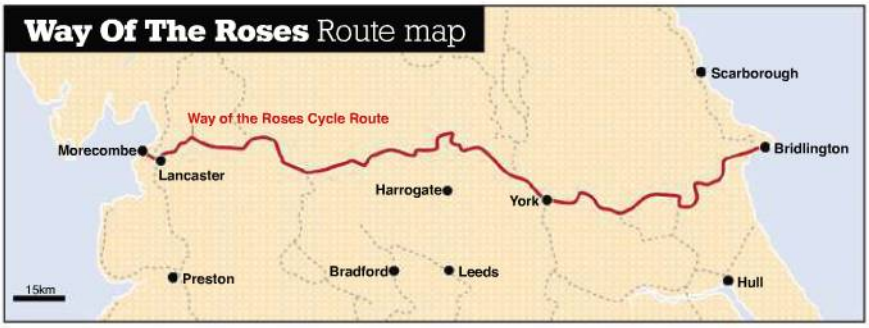
Way Of The Roses Elevation map





Making steady progress on the road to Settle

'With the toughest climb on the route out of the way I begin to feel like a real cyclist'



I'm 20 minutes down the road before I realise she's sent me the wrong way.

Doing that extra distance isn't ideal preparation for a steep climb up the aptly named High Side hill. With my legs spinning frantically and my wheels creeping forward I make spirit-crushingly slow progress up the slope, but earn sympathetic smiles from people coming in the opposite direction.

All by myself

As I leave the town behind and climb higher, the lush greenery gives way to starker ground. There's nothing on either side of me except coarse grass, rocks and sheep, some of whom wander into the road then scamper away when they see me coming.

With the toughest climb of the route out the way I begin to feel like a real cyclist and I'm glad to see a fellow rider in the distance. I'll stop him and have a chat. We can be bike brothers and share our two-wheeled experience.

But it turns out that camaraderie between cyclists isn't a given. When I flag him down he isn't interested in what I'm doing and when I ask if he'd like to pose for a photograph with me he looks as if I've just invited him to apply saddle sore cream to my nether regions.

We go our separate ways and I continue for 35km through the imposing landscape. There are more testing climbs, only this time there's no-one coming the other way to offer a smile as I edge up to the route's 402m highpoint.

My legs are now beginning to tire and the big 'slow' signs painted on the road before tight bends seem more like a comment on my progress than an instruction to drivers. Even worse, this section is one of the few stretches that takes you on a major road, so while I'm crawling along, cars and lorries fly past my right ear.

The reward for coming through that section is a fast descent and the chance to top 50km/h. After that there's one final climb then a relatively easy 16km ride to Ripon. It's been a harder first day than I expected. I just hope my legs are co-operative in the morning.

A fresh start

I wake up feeling better than I thought I would, which is a bonus, as is the flat start to the day. The roads on the ›

Jon looks for directions to a cathedral called York Minster

50km stretch to York are narrow but quiet, with farmland on both sides so it's a chance to make good progress without using too much energy.

After an early lunch in the historic city and a quick tour of the Minster it's another flat 15km to Stamford Bridge, scene of a bloody 11th-century battle that saw King Harold's English army defeat the invading Vikings. I try but fail to find a parallel between that epic battle and my own measly struggle so I peddle on.

Next stop is the quiet town of Pocklington, with its 250-year-old gun shop. I've been feeling nervous about what's coming up, the toughest climb of the day, but it turns out to be a gradual incline and by the time I get to the high point at the village of Huggate I feel I can relax and enjoy the last 50km.

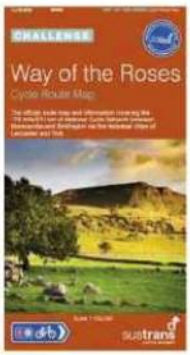
It might be because I'm getting close to the finish, or it might be the painkillers I've necked to take the edge off the friction-induced pain in my backside, but I feel better than at any point since yesterday morning. Time to push on for the final stretch, thundering up the inclines and moving through the gears on the flat.

I cruise into Bridlington and along the seafront in the late afternoon sun. On the way home I'll go over the ride in my mind, wondering whether I could have tackled those hills any better, or gone harder on the descents. But for now, the only thing I'm going to worry about is what sort of fish I'm going to have with my chips.

Get in gear Essential kit for your sea-to-sea ride

Specialized Sirrus Elite £549.99
The Sirrus Elite has enough speed to allow you to make good progress and the sturdiness to make sure that your bike tool stays in your bag. You'll need all three chain rings to get you up the steep hills and to take advantage of the descents.
specialized.com

Way Of The Roses map £6.99
Your trusty waterproof map covers everything from incidental info such as how far you've gone and where the hills are to crucial details such as where to find the nearest pub.
sustrans.org.uk



Gore Bike Wear Power Tights £59.99
Comfort is paramount on a long ride and these padded shorts will give you extra cushioning without making it look like you're wearing a nappy. They've been cut to fit snugly and the seams have been positioned to minimise chafing.
gorebikewear.co.uk

Triumph as Jon arrives on the east coast at Bridlington

For tips on how to make long-distance cycling easier go to **mensfitness.co.uk/links/thelonghaul**

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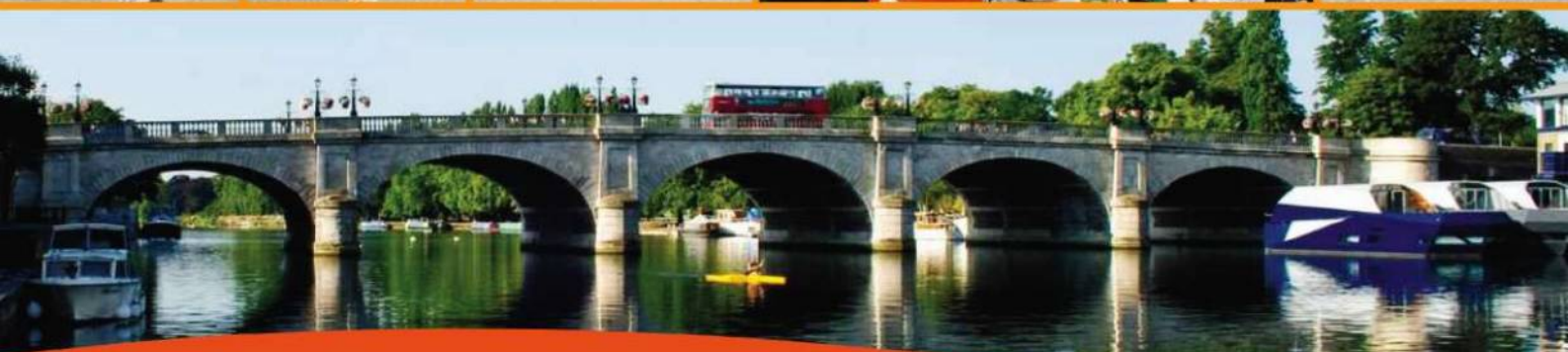

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Race report **London Triathlon**

Capital challenge

It's the biggest triathlon in the world – and this year *MF*'s Nick Hutchings was on the starting line. Here's how he did and his tips on how to take on the London course

What different race options are there?
Individual racers could take on one of three different distances in the Challenger World London Triathlon: the super sprint (400m swim, 10km bike, 2.5km run), sprint (750m swim, 20km bike, 5km run) or Olympic (1,500m swim, 40km bike, 10km run). Relay teams of three could do the sprint or the Olympic, with every team member doing a leg each. I went for the individual Olympic.

How do I know which event suits me best?
In terms of cardiovascular demand an Olympic triathlon is comparable to a half marathon, so if you're already doing races of that length or further, and are prepared to do a significant amount of cross-training on a bike and in the water, you can handle the Olympic. If a 10K run is about your limit, go with the sprint. If you're new to endurance events, the super sprint is going to be the safest, most manageable option. Even if you enter one of the lesser distances, you're going to have to train for cycling and swimming (ideally in open water to mimic race conditions, but a pool will suffice if you can't get to a lake or the sea). If you're a keen swimmer, cyclist or runner with no time to cross-train but you've got mates who like the other disciplines, get a team together and enter the relay.

MF's Nick powers through the London streets

Photography **Tom Miles**

What do you have to think about during a multisport event that you wouldn't during a single-discipline race?
Chiefly kit. The kit you buy and how you use it can make a massive difference to your triathlon performance. If you don't know how to put on and take off a wetsuit properly or how to clip in or out of bike pedals – just two of the things you do in the transitions between the stages of a triathlon – your race time will seriously suffer. Apart from that, six weeks before a race it's helpful to start dedicating at least one 30-minute training session a week to practising your transitions. Knowing what you're doing can save you valuable seconds. You should also learn how to fix a punctured inner tube in case you suffer one during the race.

What was the toughest part of the course?
For me, the steep roads near Billingsgate Market during the bike stage. I didn't have a bike until three weeks before the triathlon, so most of my cycling training was on an exercise bike, which feels completely different to riding a race bike on the road. I didn't have a good grasp of when to change gear so I wasted energy and time on the climbs and didn't feel comfortable going downhill without braking. All this meant the bike leg took me 1hr 12min 3sec – not as good as I'd hoped.

Any other parts you struggled with?
The swim was like an underwater bar fight, which I'd been told it would be, so I was prepared for a few knocks. In a 100-person wave of swimmers, it's impossible not to get hit or smack other people because you're packed in like sardines. But when I knew I was about to make contact with someone I'd try to gently push them out of my path rather than hit them. I definitely kicked someone in the head though. Sorry if it was you!

What's the hardest thing to train for?
The swim. I'd done some open water training but it's totally different from the argy-bargy you'll endure during a race. The best thing to do is imagine it's going to be bad, then you might get pleasantly surprised when you only get swum over once. Things get a lot better about 500m into the swim when

Nick completes the swim in one piece

Getting ready for that all-important sprint finish

Have an isotonic drink during the bike ride to stay hydrated

everyone starts to find their rhythm – I found the swimmers around me spread out after that point and gave me the space I needed to put it a reasonable time of 30min 52sec. If you want to avoid the shenanigans, start from the back of your wave. You're less likely to get smacked but you will lose valuable time. So if you're a first-timer who just wants to finish it's a fine tactic, but if you're going for a new PB you need to man up and get to the front.

How can I improve my chances of achieving a decent time?

In the swim, don't waste time or energy trying to get revenge on someone who's accidentally hit you. Once you've got through the first 500m, lock onto the guy in front of you and try to overtake him. Once you have, do it again to the next guy and repeat until you're out of the water.

During the bike leg, take a bottle of isotonic drink and make sure you drink all of it so you stay well hydrated. You should take some energy gels as well so your body gets the carbs it needs to keep you going through the run. You should go hard at the run from the outset but save something for the last lap – it feels magic crossing the line at full pelt.

'The swim was like an underwater bar fight, which I'd been told it would be, so I was prepared for a few knocks'

In training, make sure you do brick sessions (workouts comprising at least two triathlon disciplines back to back), some of which should cover actual race distances, as well as lots of one-discipline sessions that are race distance or more. One swim, one run, one cycle and one brick session a week

Learn from our experience

Swim

Don't panic if someone swims over you – you'll only be underwater for a couple of seconds. Try not to resurface behind them or you might get kicked in the face.

Swim-to-bike transition

Read the literature. I thought you could take your suit off next to your bike berth and spent valuable seconds arguing with a marshal who made me take it off and chuck it in a bag before I went into the bike rack hall.

Bike

Practise hill gear changes before the race. Riding up a slope in a gear so high it's almost bringing you to a stop will eat into the leg strength you need for the run.

Bike-to-run transition

Your helmet needs to be on before you take your bike out of its berth during the swim-to-bike transition and it needs to be kept on until you've slotted your bike back into the rack. If you get caught not wearing it, you could get disqualified.

Run

Drink little and often, and stick to water. Drinking too much will leave liquid sloshing around in your stomach uncomfortably, while you're likely to spill a cup of sports drink over your hands, creating an unpleasant sticky mess. Your best bet is to accept water from each drinks station (they appear every kilometre), take a sip, then pour the rest over your head to keep you cool.

London Triathlon by the numbers

51.5km Total Olympic distance

1hr 49min 3sec Olympic distance winning time by Courtney Atkinson

MF's time **2hr 36min 55sec**

MF's breakdown

30min 52sec	Swim
3min 55sec	T1
1hr 12min 3sec	Cycle
2min 24sec	T2
47min 41sec	Run

Total number of competitors **13,500**

38th ***MF*'s position** out of 415 in the Olympic Mixed Age Group category

When is the next race?

The 2011 London Triathlon will take place on 30-31st July. **Check thelondontriathlon.co.uk** for details.

Are there other multi-discipline races in the UK?

Triathlon is one of Britain's fastest-growing sports and you can find plenty of races at **fun2tri.co.uk** and **onestepbeyond.org.uk**. If you want a gentler, slighty less serious introduction to the world of multi-discipline events, try one of the Rat Race adventure races, which take place in a number of British cities. Go to **ratraceadventure.com** for more information.

KICK CELEB BUTT

The times to beat from this year's crop of celebrity racers

2hr 14min 15sec
Olympic

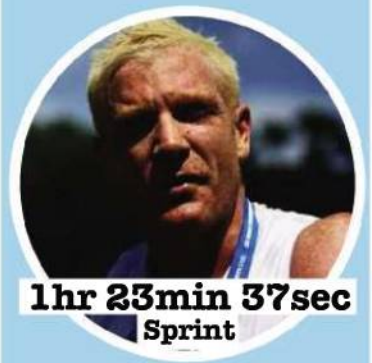
Formula One champ
Jenson Button

2hr 17min 24sec
Olympic

Moto GP rider
Bradley Smith

2hr 49min 5sec
Olympic

TV presenter
Vernon Kay



1hr 23min 37sec
Sprint

400m runner
Iwan Thomas

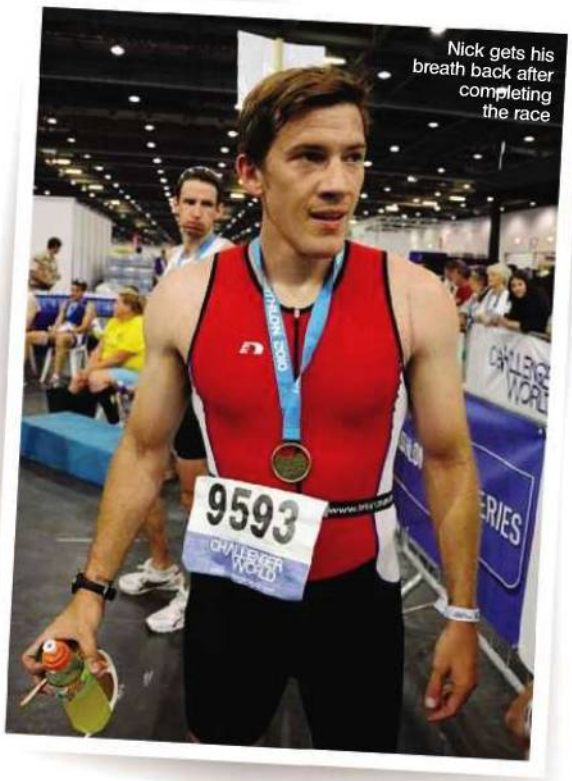
Photography SportCam Ltd, Getty

following the above rules should put you on the road to a satisfying time.

How can I make the transition stages less time-consuming?

Practise them before the race – I didn't do enough of this and consequently recorded some shocking transition times. My best, between the bike and run legs, was 2min 24sec. Swim in a wetsuit, get out of the water, start jogging and take your suit down to your waist while you're on the move. Once you've got it down to your waist, stop and take it off completely as quickly as you can. It's best to put baby oil or another lubricant on your ankles and wrists before you put it on to make it easier to slip off.

After cycling with clip-in pedals, get off the bike and try running 100m in them – you'll be doing this between your bike transition berth and the bike stage starting line. Practise putting on your running shoes as quickly as you can and run a few kilometres in them without socks. Put Vaseline on parts of the inners that cause blisters – this will reduce the chances of chafing during the race. That's what I did and it meant I was able to run a painless 47min 41sec 10K, meaning my overall time was 2hr 36min 55sec.



Nick gets his breath back after completing the race

Essential triathlon kit

Specialized Tarmac Elite **£1,599**
Super-light and stiff thanks to its FACT carbon frame, while ergonomic alloy handlebars give great control. Great for both elite-level racers and keen amateurs.
evanscycles.com

Nike Air Pegasus+ **£115**
A neutral cushioning shoe that works for mild over- and under-pronators. It's got a decoupled crash pad to minimise jarring heel and toe impacts and a springy, responsive midsole.
store.nike.com

Speedo LZR Racer Tri Pro **£130**
A light, quick-drying suit that feels comfortable under your wetsuit and keeps everything in place during the cycle and the run. It's wind-resistant and wicks sweat away from your body, reducing the chances of chafing.
store.speedo.co.uk

Orca 3.8 Male 2010 **£350**
The 5mm AeroDome Core Equilibrium neoprene torso in this wetsuit provides serious buoyancy. Its Aquatred forearm panels help you generate more power with every stroke and the suit is incredibly flexible too.
orca.com

We've got triathlon tips aplenty at **mensfitness.co.uk/links/tippedtotri**

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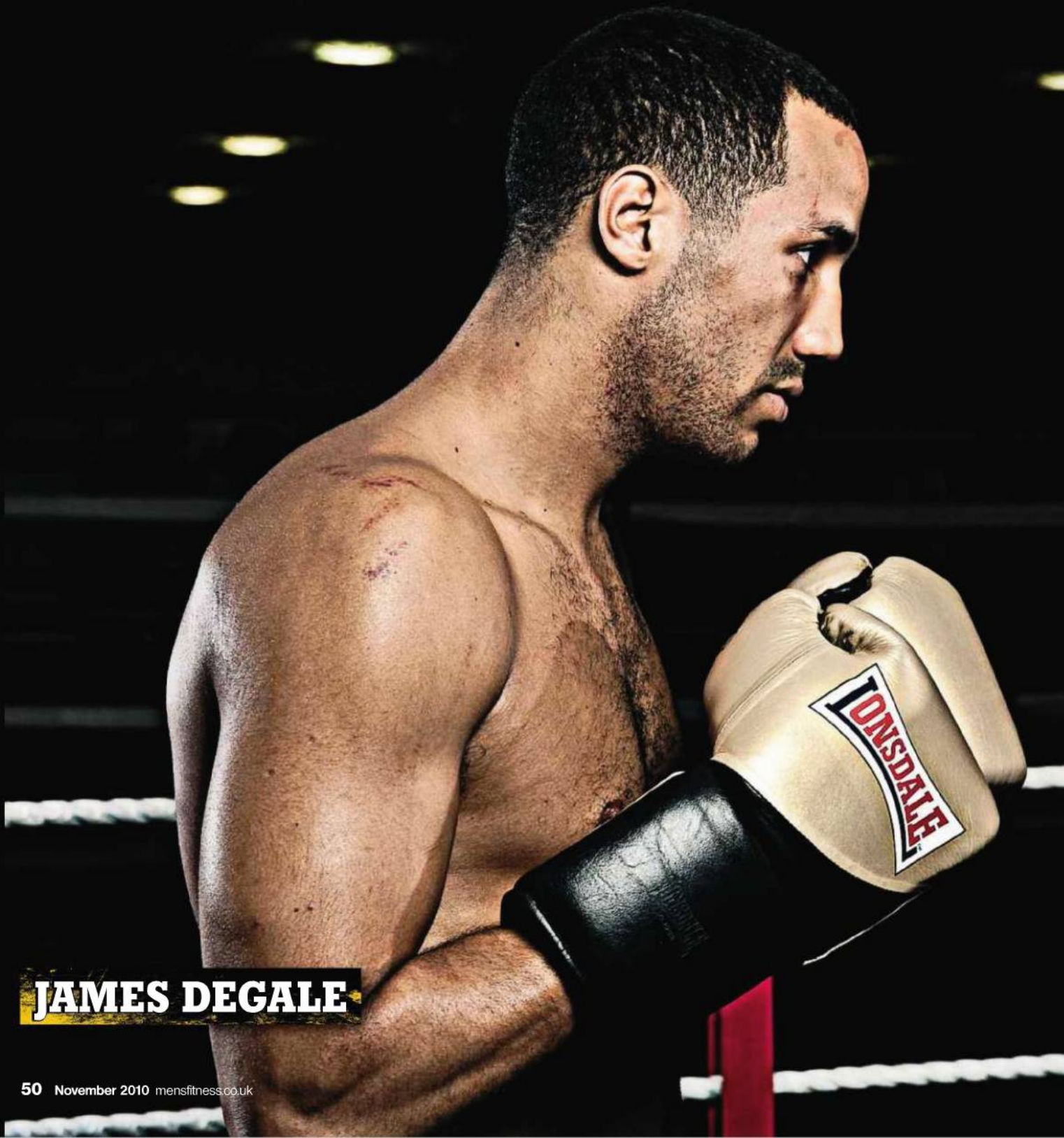


JAMES DEGALE

FIGHT SPECIAL

VS UFC

Two different fighting styles – but which gets you fitter? We pitted two top fighters against each other to find out

Words **Joel Snape** Photography **Tom Miles**

THE CHALLENGE

We devised five tests to challenge every aspect of our fighters' fitness – from raw punching power to endurance and footwork. Neither man knew exactly what he was in for at the start, and we've stuck to bodyweight moves where possible to keep the playing field level. Let battle commence! ›

THE CONTENDERS

UFC

PAUL TAYLOR

PRO RECORD | WINS 10 DEFEATS 5 DRAWS 1

FIGHTING WEIGHT 70kg

A former WKPC world kickboxing champion, Taylor made the switch to MMA in 2002 and has gone on to become one of the most exciting fighters in the UFC. He has been awarded the Fight Of The Night bonus for three of his bouts with the promotion.

BOXING

JAMES DEGALE

PRO RECORD | WINS 7 DEFEATS 0 DRAWS 0

FIGHTING WEIGHT 76kg

After winning Olympic gold as a middleweight in Beijing, 'Chunky' DeGale ripped through seven straight opponents – scoring five knockouts – en route to the WBA international super middleweight title.

ROUND ONE PUSHING POWER

THE TEST

Max press-ups in one minute

Huge amounts of press-ups have always been a staple of fight training, working everything from the triceps and chest to the core.

RULES

- **Touch a 10cm-tall stack of weight plates with the chest at the bottom of each rep.**
- **Straight arms at the top of the rep.**
- **Stopping is fine, but each rep must be done with the body in a straight line.**

PREDICTIONS

'Well, I do a lot of bodyweight moves like pull-ups, dips, press-ups and planks,' says DeGale. Taylor is less confident. 'We don't do a lot of press-ups in training. We'll do stuff that's more explosive and covers a wider range of muscle groups – so we might do a medicine ball press-up that's more explosive, going from arm to arm so it works the stabiliser muscles.'

RESULTS

The two have different approaches. Taylor rips out two dozen incredibly fast reps early, then settles down to a steady pace for the rest of the challenge. DeGale maintains a higher tempo throughout, but stops to shake the lactic acid out of his arms a couple of times. It's an absolute nail-biter – and incredibly, both men manage exactly 67 reps.

REACTIONS

'I hated that,' says Taylor. 'I'd rather be doing renegade rows – basically a burpee where you hold dumb-bells throughout. It's all about changing levels, because that's what a fight's like.'

Photography XXXXXXX XXXX Source XXXXXXX XXXX Words XXXXXXX XXXX

FIT TO FIGHT

How do our fighters' training regimes differ?

JAMES DEGALE

'I'll train twice a day, usually for about four hours a day, depending on what we're doing,' says DeGale. 'But even if we only go for 45 minutes, it's hard and intense. Most boxers will do eight three-minute rounds with a minute's rest in between – I'll usually take 30 seconds, or no rest at all, for 12 rounds. We'll do a lot of bodyweight moves for fitness, but most of my training is bagwork, padwork and sparring – I train with top guys like Tony Bellew, the light-heavyweight commonwealth champ.'

This test isn't the first time DeGale has encountered an MMA fighter, either – he regularly trains at London Shootfighters with their resident pros. 'I've been doing rounds with guys like John Hathaway and James Zikic,' he says. 'They're not at the top skill level boxing-wise, but they're tough and strong, so they can push me. I do watch MMA a bit, and they put on some good fights. My only weakness is food – everything I eat is good and wholesome, but I like to eat a lot of it.'

PAUL TAYLOR

'The trouble with MMA is that it's difficult to fit everything in,' says Taylor. 'When I'm full at it, Monday morning is *luta livre* [a style of submission wrestling], with an hour of technique, then an hour of sparring, then more drilling. I'll have a two-hour snooze in the afternoon, then be back in the gym for striking practice. We might just do one combination but I'll throw it as if I really want to hurt my partner, so he'll try to stay composed under the pressure. Tuesday morning is eight five-minute rounds of full MMA sparring – that's takedowns, kickboxing, grappling, everything – followed by ten minutes of various abs exercises to finish. Tuesday evening is my wrestling session, and I'll repeat those two days of workouts throughout the week. Saturday is strength and conditioning, with moves like tyre flips and sledgehammer swings. We'll do two circuits of maybe 20 moves with minimal rest, then do one final round with no rest at all. On Sunday I just sleep.' ❯

ROUND TWO FOOTWORK

THE TEST
T test

A classic trial of footwork and speed, this is often used to assess footballers and NFL players. This is a slightly scaled-down version designed to fit in a boxing ring.

RULES

- **One practice run and three timed runs each.**
- **Starting at the bottom of the 'T', run forwards, left, all the way to the right, left to the centre, and back.**
- **Touch the marker cone with your hand on every change of direction. Failure to do so means a missed attempt.**

PREDICTIONS

'This'll be interesting,' says Taylor. 'We don't really do specific footwork drills, but we emphasise it during our stand-up.' DeGale, on the other hand, trains his footwork specifically. 'We do one drill where I'm in a ring and my trainer will put obstacles like a glove or a skipping rope down, and I'll shadow box through them. A week before the fight we'll do agility ladder drills for speed.'

RESULTS

Taylor starts fast and gets faster, going from 4.4sec to 3.8sec, but DeGale puts on a real show. He manages a scorching 3.5sec on his first attempt only to improve to 3.25sec on his second and third tries.

REACTIONS

'I'm fast, that's one of my best attributes,' says DeGale. 'I'm good with my hands, good with my feet.' 'This was fun,' says Taylor. 'Footwork's very important in my sport, probably more so than when I was a pure striker. I have to worry about takedowns as well as being able to counter and attack.'

Photography XXXXXX XXXXXX Stylist XXXXXX XXXX Words XXXXXX XXXX

ROUND THREE PULLING POWER

THE TEST
Max chin-ups

Chin-ups are one of the best exercises for fighters – alongside working the back muscles (for retracting punches fast) and grip, they also work the abs.

RULES

- **With an underhand grip, do as many reps as possible without coming off the bar.**
- **Straight arms at the bottom.**
- **Chin over the bar at the top.**
- **No swinging.**

PREDICTIONS

'I'm dreading this,' admits Taylor. 'I don't do many chin-ups.' DeGale does them as part of his bodyweight work, but on the other hand he is heavier than Taylor.

RESULTS

After losing a coin toss DeGale goes first and blasts out a quick dozen, then manages another four with pauses in between. Taylor goes at a slower pace and there's a bit of leg-twitching on the final couple of reps, but the judges rule them legal for a total of 16. It's another draw.

REACTIONS

'I'm pretty pleased with that,' says Taylor. 'Obviously all the other stuff I'm doing is leaving me strong.'

ROUND FOUR PUNCHING POWER

THE TEST
20 Rockies

Striking coaches aren't always a fan of weighted moves, but the Rocky – a standing twist with a 30kg Olympic barbell – is a gym staple. The key to doing them well is using the legs and hips, not just the arms.

RULES

- **The bar must come back behind the line of the chin at the bottom of the rep.**
- **Straight arm at the top of the rep.**
- **Change arms at the top of the tenth rep.**

PREDICTIONS

Neither man does these much in training, but Taylor reckons his strength and conditioning sessions might give him the edge. 'We'll do 20 stations of plyometric movements, going for 45 seconds all out on each one, with 15 seconds rest in between. Three rounds of that is a killer.'

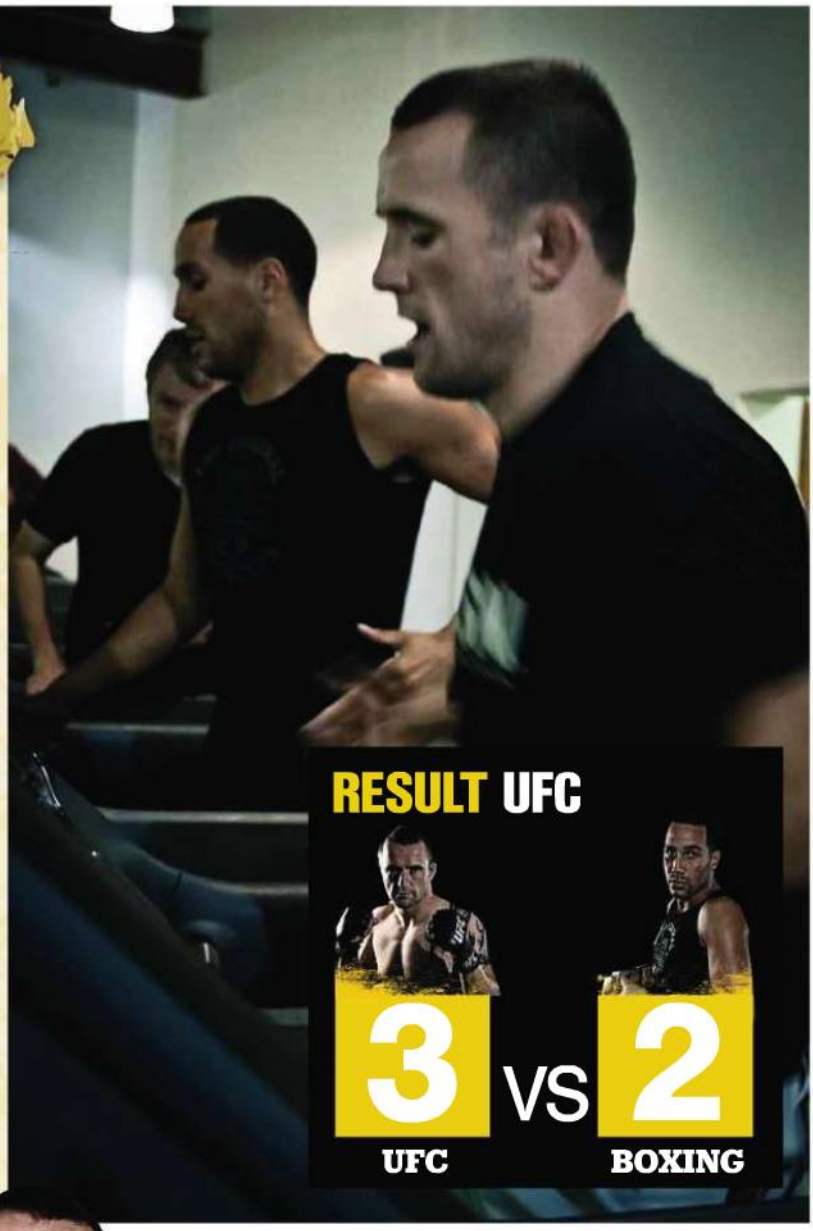
RESULTS

This one's a sprint, and with the relatively light weight involved the key is just getting it moving as fast as possible. DeGale gets all his reps done in 12.5sec, but Taylor edges it with a flat 12sec, which means it's level pegging going into the final test.

REACTIONS

'That wasn't too bad,' says Taylor. 'I'm used to short, all-out bursts of exertion, as that's what a fight is like.'

ROUND FIVE ROADWORK



THE TEST
1 km run

Roadwork has long been a staple for fighters, although many now ignore long, slow distance runs in favour of shorter bursts that better mimic the demands of a fight.

RULES

- **Fighters are in charge of their own speed settings.**
- **Falling/jumping off the treadmill results in a disqualification.**

PREDICTIONS

'I think I'll do well in this,' says Taylor. 'We do a lot of short distance stuff, sprints are still great conditioning for fighters.' 'We do a lot of running too,' says DeGale. 'A typical session might be eight 400m sprints with a minute of rest between them. But we'll also do longer recovery runs, like an hour or so. You need that mileage in your legs in rounds 11 and 12.'

RESULTS

Both men crank their treadmills straight up to the fastest they'll go – 20km/h – and stay there for a couple of minutes. DeGale is the first to crack, briefly taking his down to a modest 19.5km/h, but he quickly ramps it straight up again. Taylor slows a little towards the end but takes the victory in an impressive 3min 16sec, with DeGale two seconds behind him.

REACTIONS

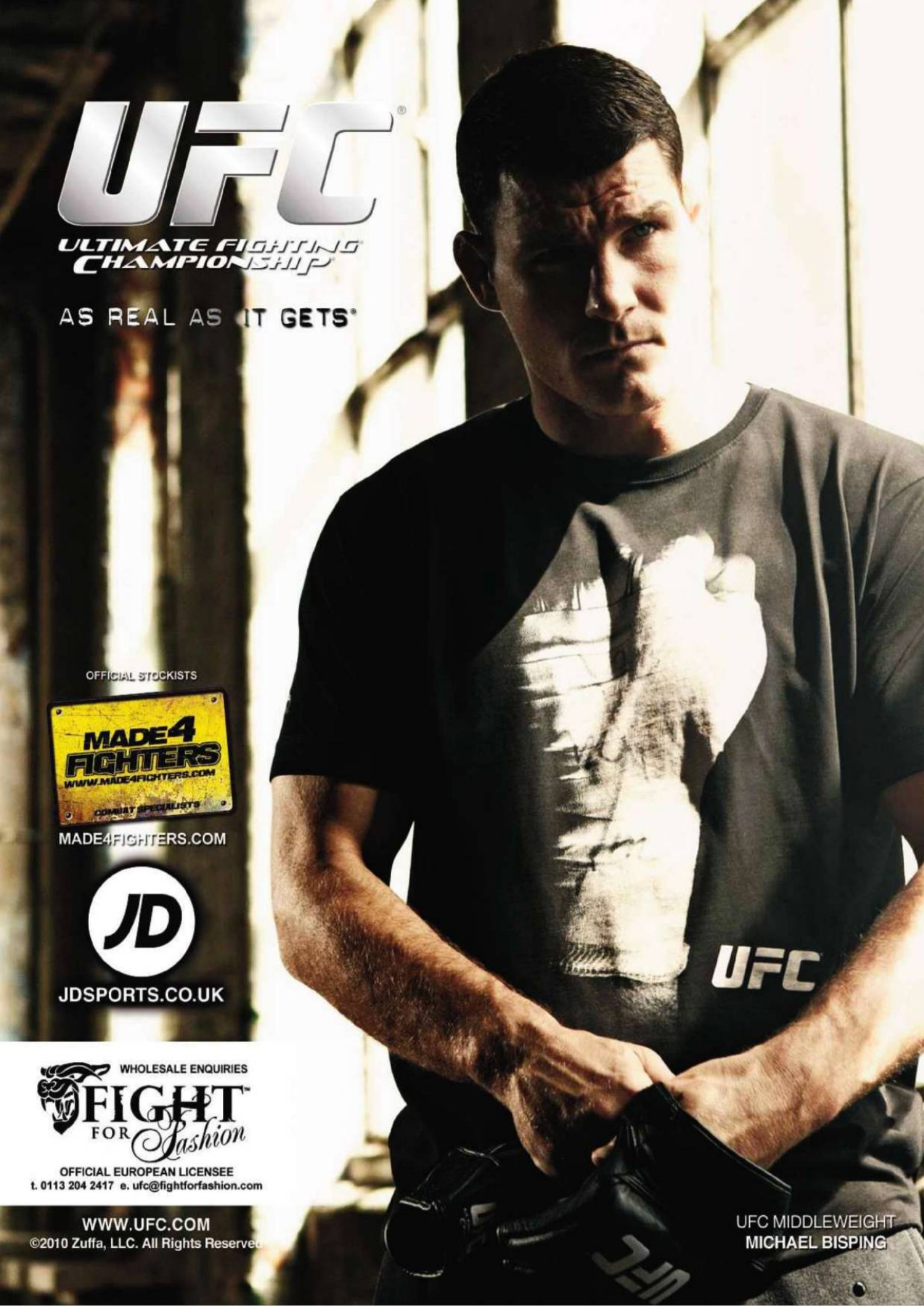
'I didn't think he'd be able to go faster than me,' says Taylor. 'Like I said, I do a lot of running.'

WINNER
Paul Taylor

By the narrowest of margins, with two of the tests drawn, MMA comes out on top. 'I'm pleased with how today's gone,' says Taylor. 'I don't know if all MMA fighters are as fit as me, but I know I train hard, and I think that's come across.'

Watch the video of DeGale taking on Taylor at **mensfitness.co.uk/links/boxvsufc**

James DeGale is sponsored by Lonsdale (lonsdale.com). Paul Taylor is sponsored by USN (usn.co.uk). Thanks to London Shoofighters and Hooks Gym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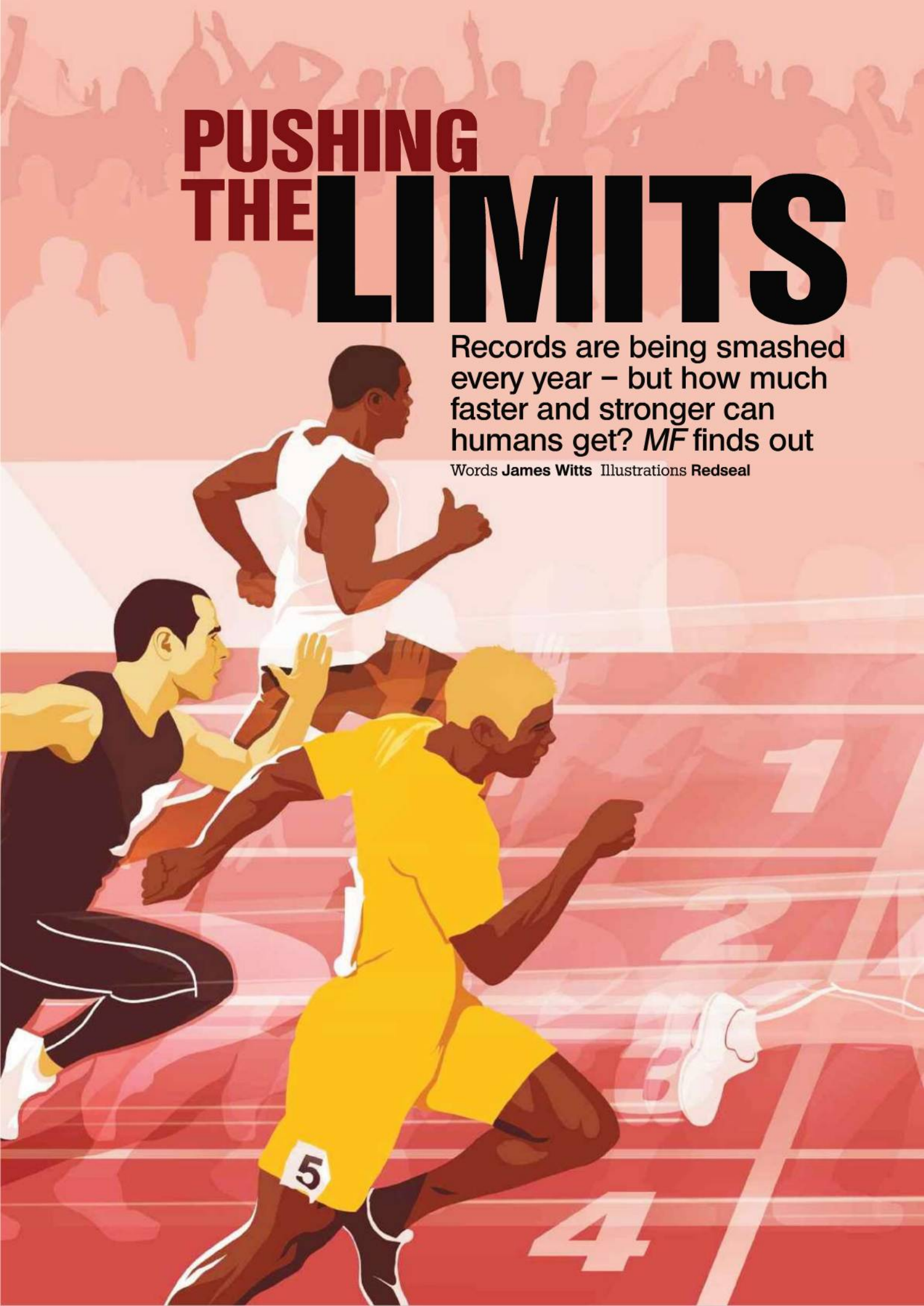
PUSHING THE LIMITS

Records are being smashed every year – but how much faster and stronger can humans get? *MF* finds out

Words **James Witts** Illustrations **Redseal**



SPEED

WHERE WE ARE

Not a difficult one: Usain Bolt has redefined what's possible in the ultimate tests of speed, the 100m and 200m. The 24-year-old Jamaican sprinter holds both world records – 9.58sec and 19.19sec, respectively.

HOW FAR CAN WE GO?

Bolt's record-breaking margin in the 100m is the greatest dip in time since the start of electronic measurements in the late 1960s. His verdict on the limits of 100m performance: 'I think it will stop at 9.40sec, but you never know.' The Jamaican has rewritten the record books, but even Bolt realises he has an end point – a time where his 1.95m, 94kg frame won't be able to go any quicker.

'His reasoning for this comes down to many factors,' says sports scientist and coach Andy Blow. 'They include – and this is by no means exhaustive – how much force the runner's muscles can exert, their stride length and reaction time to the gun. But if pushed I'd say speed of force production is a likely candidate.'

Enhancing this 'force production' comes down to increasing how fast the muscle fibres contract but, as coach Joe Beer says, 'That's not easy. It's down to co-ordinated recruitment between the neural system and muscle fibres. To get the body to recruit more muscle fibres than it would naturally do with its specific muscle mass for a certain task is the secret to driving down times. But doing so without producing so much force that the tendon doesn't rupture from its attachment point is another matter.'

Restricting factor

What the limit is before rupturing is unclear. Research carried out by Dr Gideon B Ariel in the late 1970s suggested that any 100m time faster than 9.6sec would require force enough to cause rupture. Bolt has clearly disproved this.

The speed of force production being the limiting factor is supported by a recent study by Peter Weyand of Southern Methodist University in the US. Weyand and his team undertook an experiment that measured the maximal force created by a number of subjects either sprinting forward, hopping on one leg, or running backwards on a treadmill.

'Elite sprinters can apply peak forces of 500kg with a single limb,' says Weyand. 'But the ground forces applied when hopping were 30 per cent higher than top-speed forward movement.' This shows that force generation – the amount of force your muscle can produce – isn't in itself the limiting factor.

Weyand concludes that it's actually force generation combined with ground contact time that is the limiting factor. 'The only way to increase power generated from that minimal foot contact time is by increasing how fast muscle fibres can contract to produce that maximal force.'

Improving training methods

Like many studies from the lab, applying that information in the real world is proving problematic. While Weyand and his team predicted a top human running speed of 35-40mph (Bolt's max is 27.3mph), they did so by suggesting an increase in 2X type muscle fibres – the skeletal muscle associated with power. In training, this is what athletics coaches are trying to build up through strength and speed programmes.

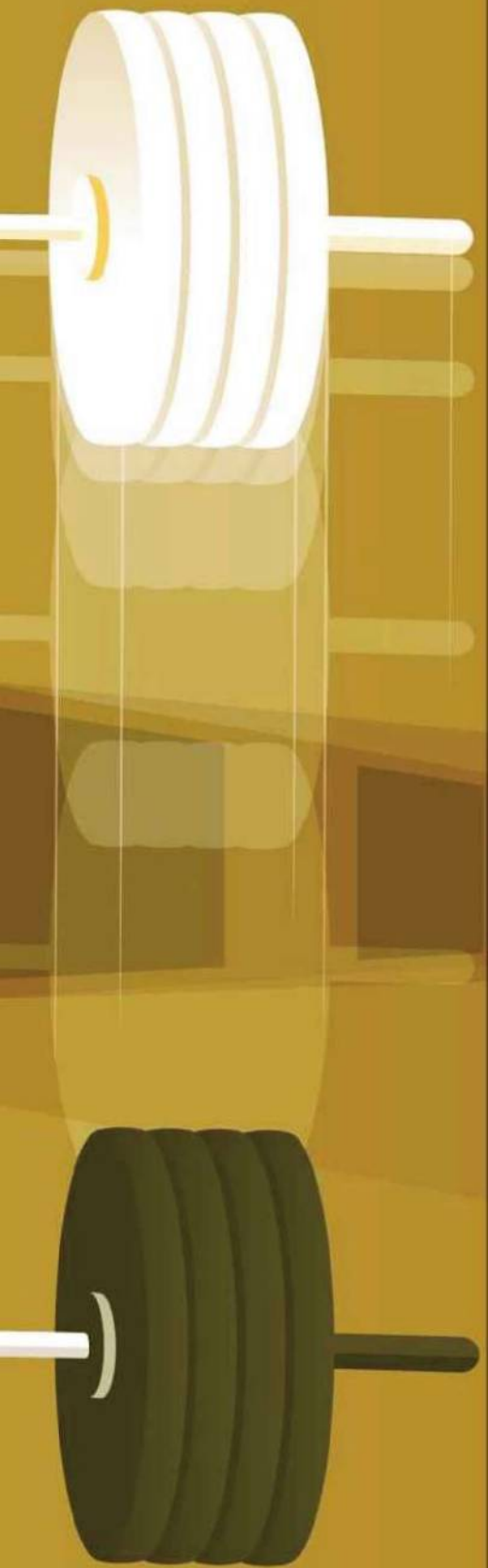
'Ultimately, whatever Bolt has done in training, he's done a little bit different than others,' says Beer. 'Things move on. There's got to be new training methods. As long as there's openness in methodology, records will keep moving on.'

Improving start times can also knock a millisecond or two off the world record. 'Working on reaction time will certainly help you become a better sprinter,' says running coach Paul Larkins.

Whether better training methods realise Weyand's predictions remains to be seen. But with advances in gear and track surface, you can be sure man will do his best to help out – and there's every chance Bolt's record will be broken.

WHAT IS THE LIMIT?

Various mathematical models and analysis of previous records have projected the men's 100m limit as 9.48sec. But Larkins goes much further. 'Usain Bolt ran the last 100m of a 150m race in Manchester [in 2009] in 8.7sec. So if somehow he can propel himself to full speed instantly, he could run that right now. It'll come. Some time, somewhere.'



STRENGTH

WHERE WE ARE

Leeds powerlifter Andy Bolton currently holds the deadlift world record – a staggering 457.5kg.

HOW FAR CAN WE GO?

You've probably heard stories of mothers lifting hatchbacks off their infants – and though they're often exaggerated, they provide a clue to what Bolton needs to do to add another 5kg to the bar.

'It's a combination of factors,' says Dr Edward Coyle, director of the Human Performance Laboratory at the University of Texas. 'But at the upper limit of what weightlifters can achieve, they need to improve their muscular efficiency, making neurological changes that allow them to recruit more muscles when they lift.'

Letting go

Convincing your neural system to go beyond what it deems safe is a difficult hurdle to overcome. Essentially, most of the time your body keeps the brakes on its full potential to avoid endangering itself, and low-rep weight training is partly about 'retraining' it to use more of the muscle it already has. That's why when something important is on the line – a baby, a world record or £1 million – people can smash their previous bests. They aren't getting stronger, they're releasing the brakes.

'Through training over 20 years, I've learned to suppress these [neurological] signals, enabling me to use a larger fraction of the muscle's potential,' says Bolton. 'And, unlike many athletes, I've done it by training less, not more. I train just three times a week, for about three hours each time, but really focus on powerful movements and good technique.'

You're also limited by your weakest link, which is something you've probably noticed if you've ever deadlifted with chalk. With a sprinkling of magnesium carbonate on your hands, you might easily rip a bar off the floor that you wouldn't be able to lift with sweaty hands because your body has misgivings.

Bolton has the same problem, just on a larger scale. 'My performance levelled off after I broke the record back in 2001 [by lifting 419kg],' he says. 'To go beyond that, I knew I needed a stronger grip. So that's what I worked on.'

In fact, Bolton's sure that the limits of strength in his sport are down to the size of the human hand: 'It can only lift so much.'

This raises the issue of genetics, which plays a huge role in how good someone is at a certain event. An explicit example of this emanates from UK Sport, which implemented a Sporting Giants programme in 2007, designed to discover young men of 6ft 3in (1.9m) and above and young women of 5ft 11in (1.8m) and above to become part of performance programmes in power sports such as rowing, handball or volleyball.

'Training and genetics are both important,' says Coyle. 'You've got a tiny country like Bulgaria turning out world-class lifters despite a tiny population, so obviously their programme is incredible, but a huge nation like China is going to be successful in weightlifting partly because it's got a massive pool of people to choose from.'

To further highlight this point, earlier this year Doug Williams, the father of 1986 Commonwealth gold medal-winning weightlifter Ray Williams, set an over-70s weightlifting record when he lifted 165kg. Ray's brother was a British champion weightlifter and his sister was also Welsh champion. 'It must be to do with genetics,' Ray says.

Mind over matter

Families such as the Williamses make it clear that the effect of genetics is undeniable. According to Bolton, so is the impact of the mind. 'The fear of failure drives me on,' he says. 'It's the only time I get nervous – before a big lift. I thrive on it; that's why I don't enter competitions in the UK anymore. There's no-one within 200lb [91kg] of me.'

So to overcome the self-imposed limits of strength, the key is to overcome your conscious and subconscious fear. But is changing your perception of fear a dangerous thing to do, suppressing your natural instinct to stop before injuring yourself? Beer says, 'It may work for the few but there'll be a lot of shrapnel left over.'

For more tips from Bolton visit andyboltonstrength.net.

WHAT IS THE LIMIT?

'I've lifted 460kg in the past but my grip gave in,' says Bolton. 'If I were to put straps on, I could lift 476kg right now. To move that sort of weight, you've got to put so much energy through the hands, the grip has got to be strong. When you get to your knees, you've got to get the grip right. But I'm working on it and I wouldn't rule out 476kg without straps.'

ENDURANCE

WHERE WE ARE

World record marathon runner Haile Gebrselassie is the man to beat in the classic endurance race with a time of 2hrs 3min 59sec. The record for a more recently created test of endurance, the Ironman triathlon, is Luc Van Lierde's time of 7hr 50min 27sec.

HOW FAR CAN WE GO?

September 2008, Berlin. Gebrselassie runs an average of 20.4km/h to set his new marathon world record, which is 51min 19sec faster than American Johnny Hayes's gold-medal winning effort at the London Olympics a century earlier. So how fast can a human being ultimately run before we hit a ceiling or, like Pheidippides after running from Marathon to Athens in 490BC, drop dead?

'Most people's limiting factor is the size of their engine – their VO_2 max, or how much oxygen they can take in when exercising at maximum intensity,' says Beer. 'They won't be able to create enough calories per minute to keep themselves going.'

Quitting too early

Other physiological limiters include the build-up of lactic acid, overheating and depletion of energy (glycogen) stores, but there has been no definitive explanation of why the body stops during endurance exercise until recently, when one was provided by Dr Samuele Marcora of Bangor University. Marcora's psychobiological model suggests that the reason we cease exercise is simple: we're quitters.

'My proposal,' Marcora says, 'is that endurance performance is directly determined by psychological factors, the two most important ones being perception of effort and motivation.'

Marcora asked ten members of the Bangor University rugby team to perform a maximal voluntary cycling power test, which consisted of an all-out five-second effort. After a period of rest, the subjects were then asked to pedal at a fixed wattage that corresponded to 90 per cent of their VO_2 max. On average, the subjects were able to continue for 12 minutes at an average 242 watts before giving in to exhaustion. Straight after this, the subjects had to repeat the all-out five-second test. Their power output had dropped by about 30 per cent from test one, but they still registered an average 731 watts. The fact they managed to produce three times as much as their average, despite previously 'hitting the wall', would suggest it wasn't a physical factor that stopped them in the first place.

In short, Marcora suggests it's how we perceive pain, rather than the physiological factors, that stops us. So if we can change how we perceive the pain, can we go harder, stronger and faster?

'In theory, yes,' says Marcora. 'Obviously to push the limits you must work on the physical, but there should be a greater use of sports psychology for endurance athletes, and exercise intensity should be based more on perceived exertion than common tools like heart rate and power.'

British triathlete Chrissie Wellington, who set a new women's Ironman-distance record of 8hr 19min 13sec in July this year and has also won the Ironman World Championships in Hawaii for the past three years, is renowned for dispensing heart rate monitors in lieu of training by feel. 'Training is about learning to hurt,' says Wellington. 'The best way to measure that is in the mind.'

Great, but how can you practically apply the mind to improve your performance at endurance sports? 'There are many tricks,' says Wellington. 'One I'd suggest using is to break the race up into smaller, more manageable segments. I always think of the marathon as four lots of 10km with a little bit more.'

Better performance

Another recent model proposed to push the boundaries of endurance is 'train low, race high' nutrition. 'In short, performing three- or four-week blocks of low-glycogen training will improve fat metabolism,' says Carl Hulston of the Copenhagen Muscle Research Centre. 'This will make your system more efficient and, in theory, you can go longer and stronger. I'd then recommend one to three weeks of normal training to recover.'

Many other ideas have professed improved endurance performance, such as applying nasal strips and using compression socks. But perhaps the secret lies in music. After all, Gebrselassie used to listen to the music of Scatman John because he found the beats fitted his world-record pace.

And in terms of pushing records back, there's the possibility that the most potentially gifted runners haven't tried their hand at the longer distance yet. Coyle says, 'There are runners competing in the 10,000m who, if they trained for the marathon, would be able to run it in under two hours.'

WHAT IS THE LIMIT?

Dr Mark Denny, a marathon runner and professor of biomechanics at Stanford University in the US, suggests 'the men's marathon time could be beaten by four minutes and 23 seconds', which means we could see someone running the 42.2km in under two hours – 1hr 59min 36sec, to be precise. MF

Dr Edward Coyle will be lead speaker at sports medicine conference UKsem 2010 (uksem.org)

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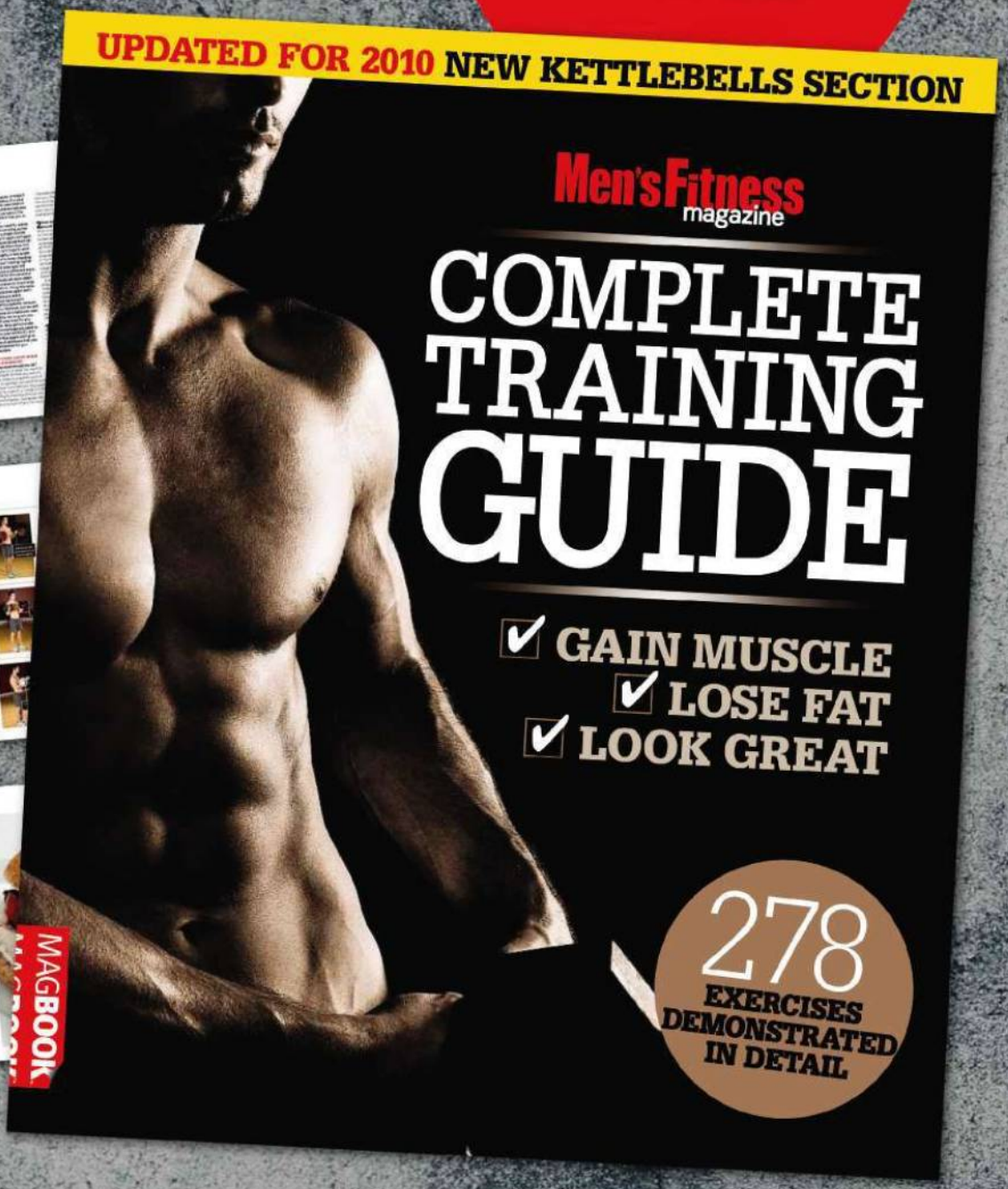

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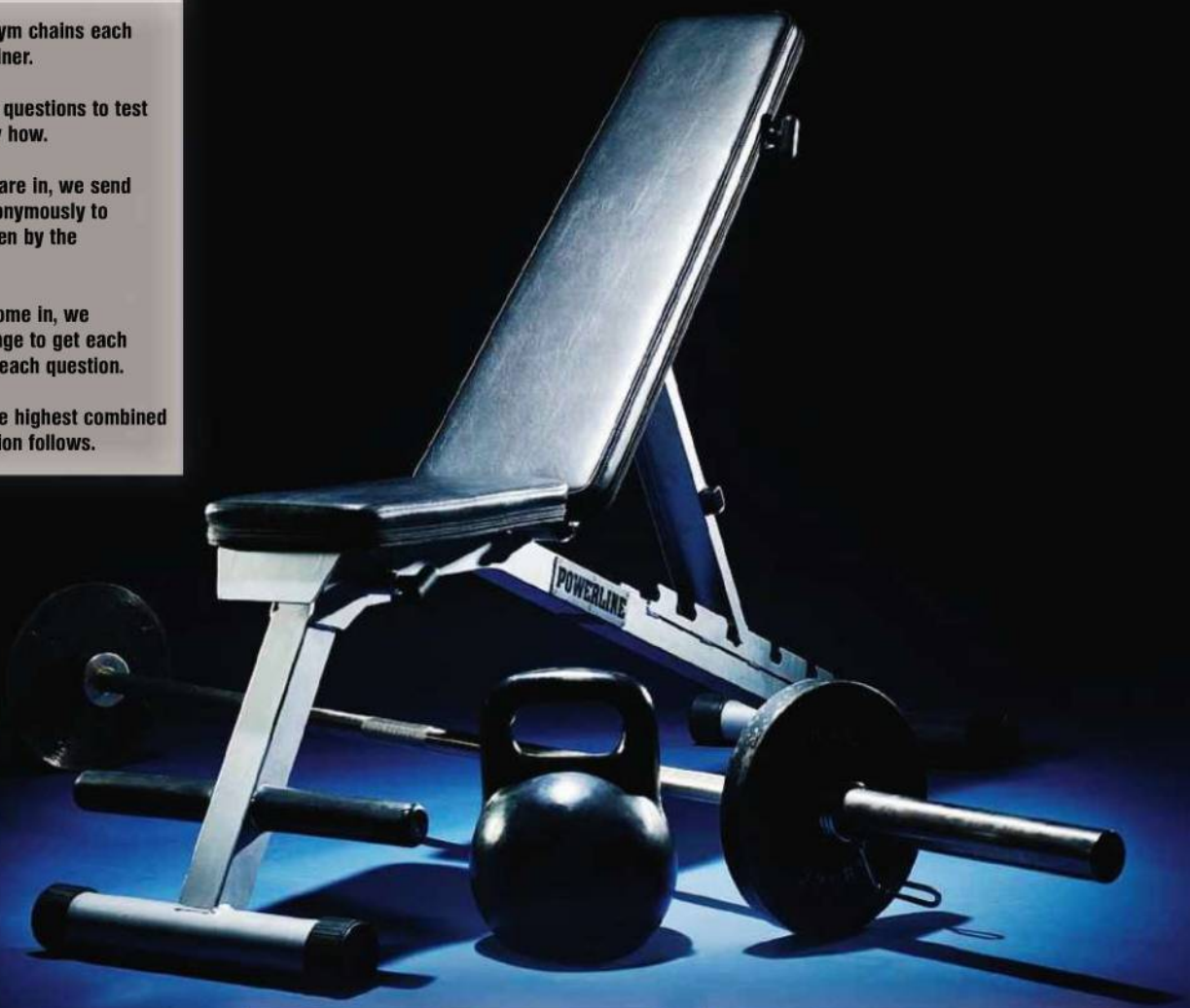
MASTER TRAINER

Who's the trainer that other trainers respect? *MF* devised a challenge to find out

Words **Joel Snape** Photography **Danny Bird**

THE RULES

1. The UK's leading gym chains each nominate a top trainer.
2. We send them five questions to test their training know how.
3. Once the answers are in, we send them out again anonymously to be marked out of ten by the other trainers.
4. When the marks come in, we calculate the average to get each trainer's score for each question.
5. The trainer with the highest combined score wins. Adulation follows.



MEET THE TRAINERS

Nuffield
Matthew Moulton
The senior wellbeing adviser at Nuffield's City club, Moulton has a BSc in sport health care and a black belt in karate.

Fitness First
Chris Rogers
In 2009, Rogers was runner-up in Fitness First's personal trainer of the year competition. He runs his own kettlebell bootcamp.

David Lloyd
John Williams
Campus training coach Williams is an experienced triathlete and has also competed in six Ironman events.

Esporta
Mark Bennett
An experienced trainer, Bennett is one of Esporta's regional champions and an exercise and lifestyle manager.

LA Fitness
Janet Malinowska
Malinowska created the Dance Fusion workout for LA Fitness, and is singer Alesha Dixon's personal trainer.

QUESTION 1

A gym-goer tells you they have four weeks to get into the best shape possible. What do you suggest?

John Williams

POINTS **6**

First, make nutrition a priority. Aim to drink 0.033 litres of water per kg bodyweight, eat three meals and two snacks a day, with a carb/fat/protein ratio of 40/30/30. This will help balance blood sugar levels while boosting metabolism. Second, resistance train four times a week with full body/compound exercises, aiming for 30-40 minutes for a good hormonal response. Ideally have six to eight exercises lifting in the metabolic/hypertrophy rep range, which is six to 12 reps. Do two quality sets for maximum time efficiency. Follow this with an intense interval cardio session lasting ten to 20 minutes – one minute hard, one easy. You'll keep burning calories for up to 72 hours.

Matthew Moulton

POINTS **6.5**

The best advice is not only just to look at exercise but to look at general health and wellbeing. There are many factors that have to be taken into consideration, such as diet, sleeping patterns and a structured exercise routine. Ensure you're constantly pushing yourself aerobically and anaerobically, allow plenty of time for recovery between sessions and maximise your training by incorporating different types of equipment such as kettlebells, TRX or the ViPR.

Mark Bennett

POINTS **6.5**

I truly believe that 80 per cent of your effort towards looking good needs to come from what you put into your mouth. Set a food diary and aim to lose no more than 1kg a week. One of the first questions I ask a client is what they do for a living. This makes a huge difference in regards to what and when they can eat. For example, the average office worker needs to use supplements to get the protein they need every two/three hours without affecting their work. I would always advise trainees to consume three solid meals a day and two forms of liquid whey protein supplementation to ensure their metabolic rate is continually high, to promote lean muscle tissue.

Chris Rogers

POINTS **8.5**

Set daily and weekly goals and take a before-and-after picture to motivate you. Training four to six times a week, alternating total-body weights circuits with interval cardio sessions, would be a given, but to get into the best shape possible the real battle lies in your nutrition and lifestyle choices. Eat lean meat and fish, lots of veg, some fruit, nuts and seeds while limiting processed foods, starchy carbs and dairy. Drink a litre of water per 20kg of bodyweight and only black tea and coffee before 12pm. No alcohol, no calories from drinks. Sleep is critical in dropping body fat and recovering from workouts, so aim to sleep for eight hours at least four nights a week – preferably between 10pm and 6am.

Janet Malinowska

POINTS **5**

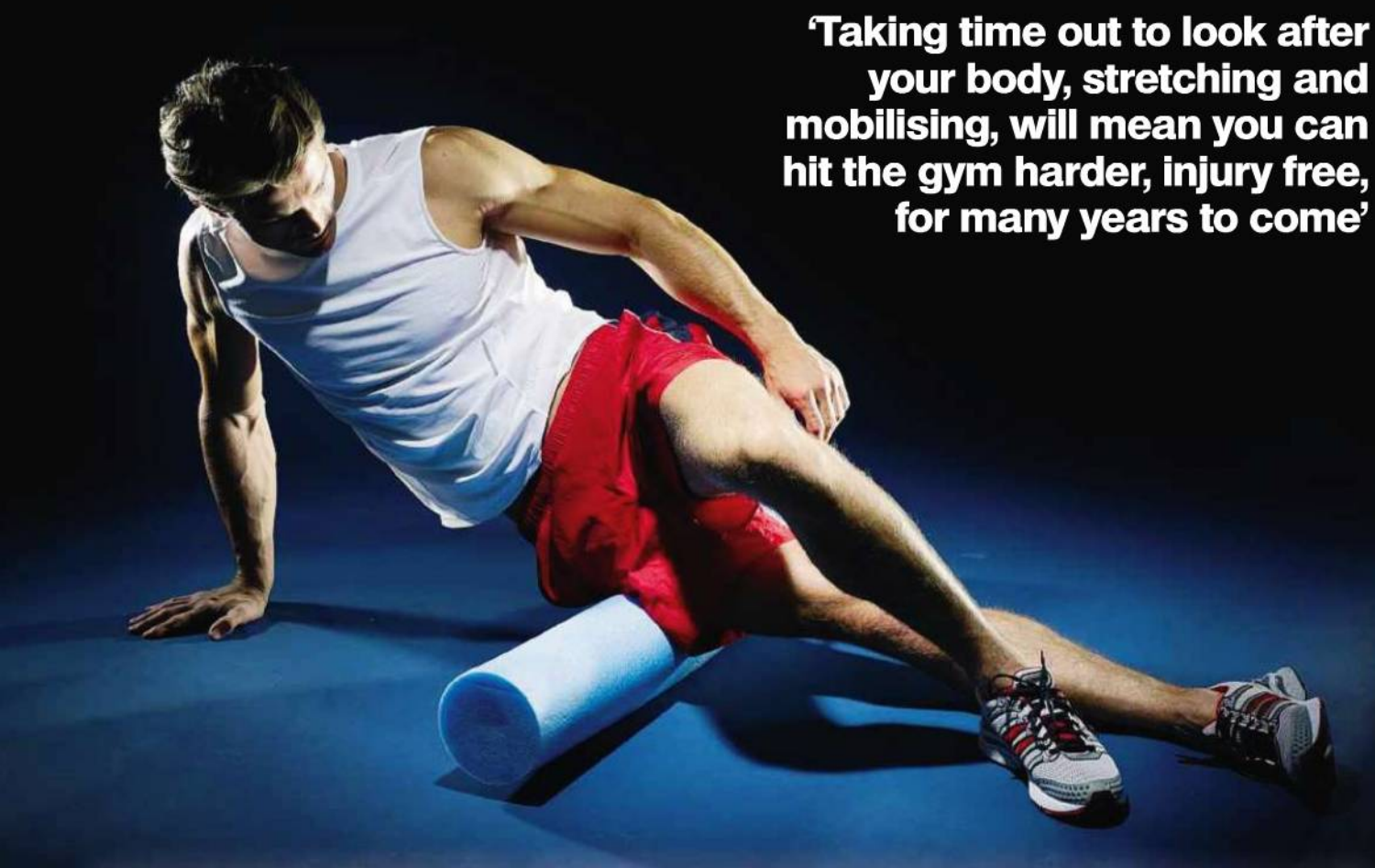
Create an explosive yet well balanced fitness regime. Maximise each training session by giving 100 per cent. Implement an eating plan that supports your programme. And finally, remain positive and focused.

TOP ANSWER!

'Goals. Frustrated I didn't mention this myself – they're essential for moving in the right direction and staying motivated.' – John Williams

QUESTION 2

What's the one thing most people who already train leave out of their routines that they should include?



'Taking time out to look after your body, stretching and mobilising, will mean you can hit the gym harder, injury free, for many years to come'

John Williams

POINTS **7**

A thorough warm-up that includes myofascial release – often done on a foam roller – which is stretching of tight muscles only and some dynamic movement relevant to the workout ahead. The aim of a training session is to stress the body to get it to adapt in some way. If it's not adequately prepared you will get less out of the session and therefore less adaptation. For muscles to 'load' effectively they need to be able to lengthen properly – this warm-up will help with that.

Matthew Moulton

POINTS **6**

Stretching. Generally people stretch only when an injury has occurred or they feel really tight – and even then, they might just do the basic stretches like a toe-touch. Neglecting stretching will not only decrease flexibility over time but increase the effects of the dreaded delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS) – so if you experience muscle tightness and cramp a few days later after training this is potentially the reason.

Mark Bennett

POINTS **4**

Legs. When I first started training at 15 I left them out of my programme because I wore trousers and decided that people (well, girls) wouldn't see them. However, leg training is proven to stimulate growth hormone and at the same time improve the overall muscle growth and strength of the human body. That's why we always stress the importance of leg exercises to new inductees.

Chris Rogers

POINTS **7.5**

Mobility and flexibility – or, as I like to call it, 'prehab'. Everyone is concerned with dropping fat and getting toned so this falls by the wayside, but taking time out to look after your body, stretching and mobilising, will mean you can hit the gym harder, injury free, for many years to come. Take the time to stretch after your workouts or in front of the TV in the evening. If you don't do it for the stress-reducing benefits at least do it for the fact that stretching gives your muscles more room to grow. Yoga and tai chi are awesome if you're not sure where to start.

Janet Malinowska

POINTS **6**

From my observation, regular gym-goers tend to neglect stretching/flexibility and core work. Whether it's due to a lack of knowledge or a lack of time, these areas seem to get forgotten in their routines, which can lead to injures and further problems.

TOP ANSWER!

'The term prehab is great – the importance that mobility and flexibility have in maintaining function is frequently overlooked.' – John Williams

QUESTION 3

The bench press is a staple move for most gym-goers. What's the best way to progress?

John Williams

POINTS 8

The best way to progress is to 'periodise' the way you lift. Periodising could be defined as changing variables of exercise to get maximum response. The body ignores consistent stimulus, so if you lift with the same reps and sets for too long your body won't respond. Instead, try doing four to six workouts lifting for endurance (12-15 reps, 45 seconds' rest) followed by four to six lifting for strength (eight to ten reps, 60 seconds' rest) and for power (four to six reps, two minutes' rest).

TOP ANSWER!

'Very impressive answer – I really like the breakdown of the workouts in terms of set ands reps.' – Janet Malinowska

Matthew Moulton

POINTS 7

Most gym-goers see little progress because they stick to the same exercises for months on end. Variety is essential, so changing the plane of motion and style of contraction across this muscle group will pay dividends. It's also important to pay attention to the triceps, anterior deltoids and rotator cuffs – developing these will promote muscle fibre recruitment and increase strength and size.

Mark Bennett

POINTS 5

Most gym-goers develop muscle imbalances through only stimulating compound muscle groups and not therefore engaging essential muscles. One exercise that would beneficial to stimulate the pectoral area and at the same time incorporate the abdominal structure would be a dumb-bell press performed on a gym ball. Not only will this reduce imbalances and improve your bench, it'll also engage your abs.

Chris Rogers

POINTS 7

Slow things down and change things up. Instead of bouncing the bar off your chest, try taking three to four seconds on the eccentric [downward] portion of the lift – this will increase the time that the muscle is under tension and enhance potential strength and muscle gains. Another tip is to vary the width of your grip and the thickness of the bar – wrap your towel around it to make a thicker grip if your gym doesn't have thick bars. Change your workout every three to four weeks.

Janet Malinowska

POINTS 5.5

Just like any exercise, in order to develop the bench press you must look into your technique as well as your alignment and grip. It's important to get an accurate assessment of your one-rep max to give you something to work from, and using a spotter can be invaluable.

QUESTION 4

If you were stranded on a desert island with one item of fitness equipment, what would you pick?

John Williams

POINTS **8**

Easy – the new ViPR. The name stands for vitality, performance and reconditioning. It's a full-body training tool that really is the evolution of free weights. It can be used to improve movement capabilities, increase energy levels and because of its full body nature is great for burning energy and keeping in great shape.

Matthew Moulton

POINTS **6.75**

That's easy – the TRX, mainly because it is so versatile and light and can be used anywhere. It activates your core, which is hard to do with only one piece of equipment, and the use of your bodyweight can be adjusted by either lengthening or shortening the strap or simply changing the position of your body forwards or backwards, so you can always progress with each exercise.

TOP ANSWER!

'This would certainly be fun and effective – gym balls are good, but they could burst, and then you'd be screwed...' – Chris Rogers

Mark Bennett

POINTS **7.5**

The ViPR. This has got to be the innovation of the year. It's the ideal tool to perform multiple key goals on from performance to rehabilitation. I personally use this tool daily and for me it's the best piece of kit on the market so far. Second to that is the Star Trac Human Sport equipment. This cable resistance equipment is a fantastic to use.

Chris Rogers

POINTS **7**

The kettlebell without a doubt. The versatility, effectiveness and results you can get are second to none. Cardio, interval training, strength, endurance, flexibility, core training all rolled into one. It takes up very little room and could be very useful when defending yourself or hunting.

Janet Malinowska

POINTS **6.5**

It would have to be the gym ball. I think this is the ultimate piece of equipment. It can be used to work on strength, core work, balance, flexibility and mobility. The possibilities are endless with this versatile and lightweight tool – it's the perfect desert island companion.

'A kttlebell takes up very little room and could be useful when defending yourself or hunting'

QUESTION 5

I've got 20 minutes and I'd like an interesting workout. What should I do and how would it benefit me?

John Williams

POINTS 6.5

I'd recommend a ViPR workout. If you don't have one in your gym, you can do a lot of the moves with a sandbag or powerbag. The one I've put together comes in three mini-circuits geared towards reconditioning, vitality and performance. You can easily blast through it in 17 minutes.

Matthew Moulton

POINTS 5.5

I'd use a bit of kit called the Gravity Machine as a variety of exercises can be completed on it and it's physically demanding on all strength and endurance group participants. It's also very efficient because you can do all the exercises in the same place.

Mark Bennett

POINTS 7

I've put together a ViPR workout that will burn fat, improve your cardio and build muscle with moves like the leopard crawl, wood chop and lateral toss. It'll bump up your heart rate and increase your metabolic rate for around six hours after the workout.

Chris Rogers

POINTS 8.5

If a client turns up late they get 'The Hurt Locker' – first, so they won't be late again, and second, so we can hit everything we need to do in the session but in less time. It's a short, sharp, metabolic blast that will leave you feeling like you have just done a 60-minute workout. It hits every muscle in your body, so it'll make you strong and blowtorch fat. You complete as many rounds of this as possible in 20 minutes:

- 20 kettlebell swings
- 10 Hindu press-ups
- 20 walking lunges with powerbag
- 10 plank rows
- 20 squat, twists and presses with dumb-bells
- 60 seconds' battling ropes.

Get through four rounds and you're doing well.

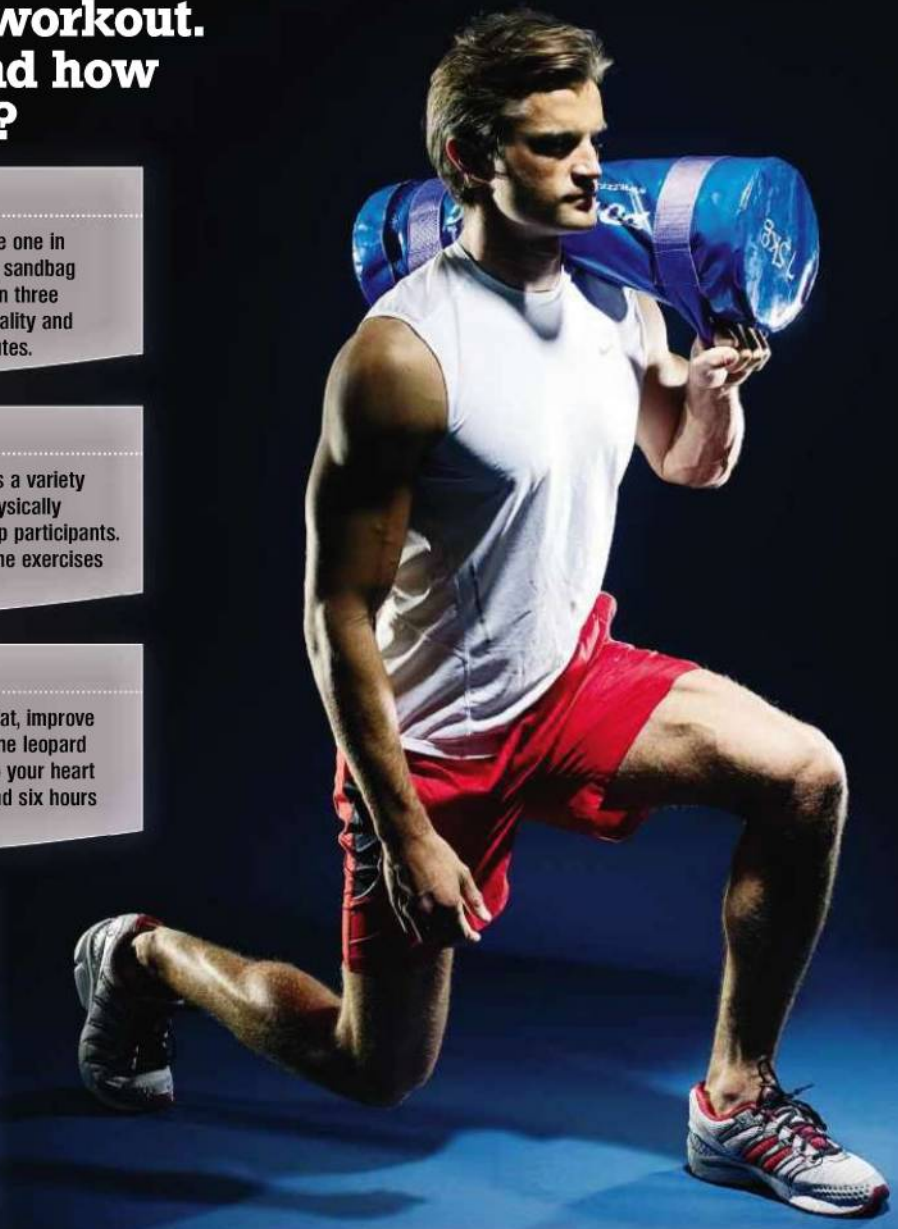
TOP ANSWER!

'When I read this I couldn't stop laughing. I can just imagine the clients' faces.' – John Williams

Janet Malinowska

POINTS 8.5

It would have to be an intense combination of high-intensity interval training and plyometric work – an all-rounder for cardio, conditioning and core strength, using exercises like burpees and clap press-ups.



THE RESULTS

Chris Rogers	38.5
John Williams	35.5
Matthew Moulton	31.75
Mark Bennett	30
Janet Malinowska	29.5

TOP TRAINER

Chris Rogers
Fitness First

It was close, but the Hurt Locker just nudged FF's man past the winning post.

Chris Rogers

I'm really pleased, obviously. I haven't done anything like this before, although because I have a blog I've had a bit of practice answering these sorts of questions. I thought I might get marked down because some of the other answers were really impressive – I especially liked the ViPR suggestions and some of Janet's stuff. It's been good fun.

For workouts from these top trainers go to **mensfitness.co.uk/links/ptprogrammes**

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LOOKING FOR A FIGHT?

Whether you want to get in shape, test your strength and fitness by sparring or get in a cage and fight, it's never been easier to get into mixed martial arts

Words **Joel Snape** Photography **Danny Bird**

On 12th November 1993, the Ultimate Fighting Championship introduced mixed martial arts to a generation brought up on Jean-Claude Van Damme and Jackie Chan movies. Stepping into the Octagon for the first eight-man tournament were a 197kg sumo wrestler, an out-of-shape French street fighter, assorted kickboxers, and a tall, skinny Brazilian called Royce Gracie. The inaugural champion was Gracie, who forced all of his opponents to submit in just over five minutes combined.

Fast-forward 17 years and the sport has changed almost beyond recognition. Apart from the introduction of judges, weight classes, rounds and rules, its evolution means a successful modern martial artist needs to learn to fight at every range, incorporating striking, wrestling and grappling. And, just as crucially, they need to be in phenomenal shape – while Gracie won fights on technique alone, every modern MMA fighter lifts, sprints and drills with the aim of getting a physical edge over opponents who are evenly matched in skill.

Fit to fight

'MMA is the ultimate way to get fit,' says Tom Davenport, a trainer at London MMA gym Urban Kings, who recently had his first professional fight. 'You'll get explosiveness from wrestling, incredible core work from Brazilian jiu jitsu, you're twisting to throw punches and you'll develop ›

'MMA is the ultimate way to get fit... You'll get endurance, muscle definition and explosive strength'

FIGHT SPECIAL

incredible cardio. You'll get endurance, muscle definition and explosive strength.'

So how can you reap the benefits? The first step is finding a gym. They're surprisingly widespread, but the quality can vary. 'In picking your gym, think about what it is you want from the sport and the level of commitment you can give to it,' says Nathan Leverton, head coach at Leicester Shootfighters. 'There are no wrong answers here. Just be honest and realistic about your goals. Are you just looking to get in better shape? Relieve some stress? Want to try something new and have fun? Learn some self-defence? Or is it your goal to be a competitive athlete? Prioritising your needs will give you questions to ask the staff and help point you in the right direction.'

'When you look at a club, don't make a decision straight away – Google the instructors to see what their qualifications are, and check whether they have beginners' classes or some other way of learning the basics,' says Davenport. 'Go to a class and watch, talk to the instructor to make sure you get on, and don't get chucked in at the deep end.'

Build your skills first

Rather than jumping straight into an MMA class, which can be overwhelming, it might be best to build your skills gradually via the different disciplines that make up the sport. 'We suggest to everyone that they should start with Brazilian jiu jitsu and groundwork, work up to striking, and then think about putting it all together,' says Anthony

'Don't jump in and spar with the best guys. Most pull their punches in training, but that won't last if you go all-out against them'

McGann, co-owner of the Widnes-based Wolfslair. 'But MMA's still our most popular class. In the long run though, being able to concentrate on one thing means you'll develop faster.'

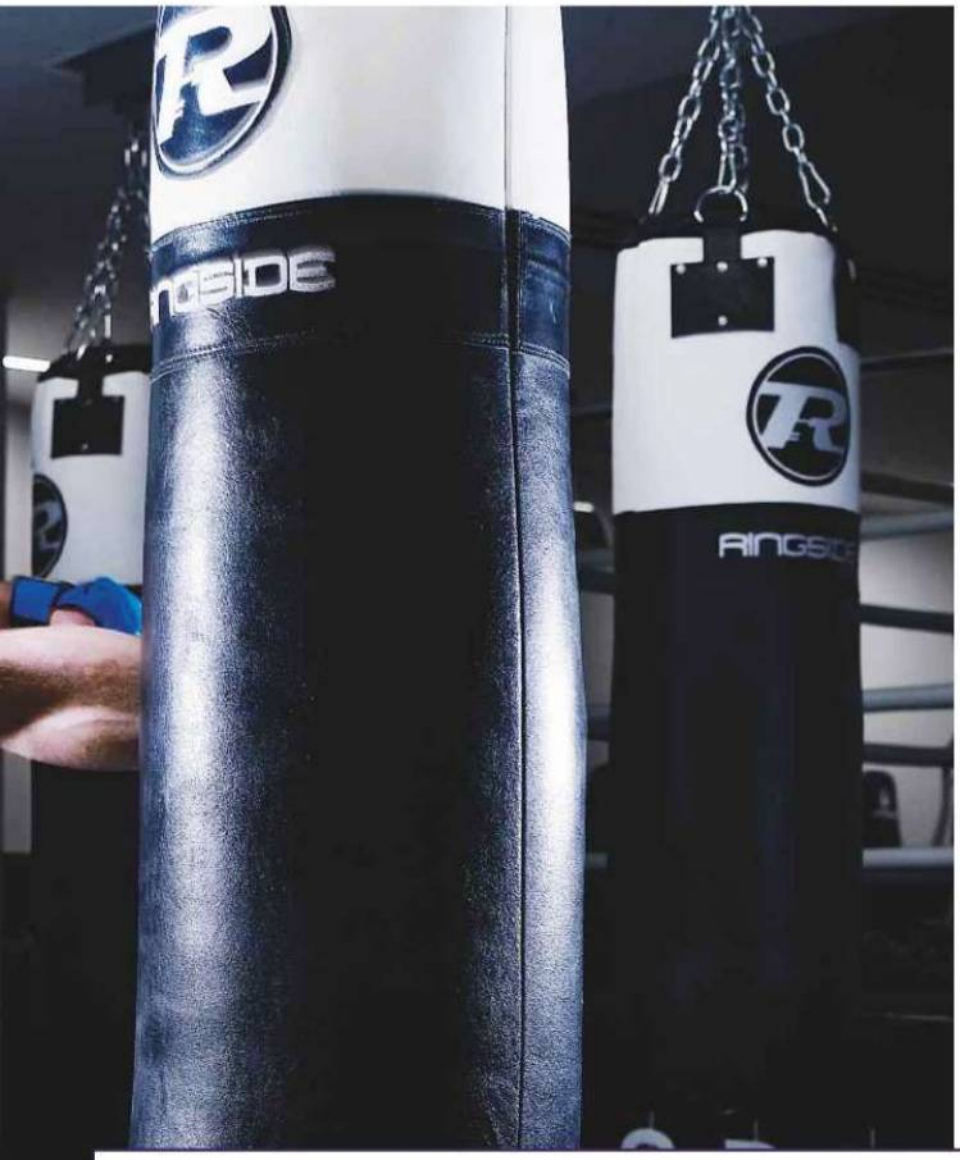
Even if you've trained before, it's best to go in with an open mind, says Joe Duffy, a Welsh fighter about to make his TV debut on MMA reality show *The Ultimate Fighter*. 'We'll get guys in who've done some striking before and don't want to learn the ground stuff, or don't think they can be taken down,'

Model **Richard@IMM**

The beginner

26-year old **Jaron Vince** has been training in MMA at Urban Kings in London for two months

'I watched Bruce Lee movies and did tae kwon do when I was eight, and I've been a fan of the UFC for about six years. I've played rugby so the physical contact isn't a problem for me, and I enjoy the technical nuances of Brazilian jiu jitsu – a couple of degrees' difference on a certain grip can make a real impact. I gained a lot of weight before starting, but over the past two months I've gone from 110kg to 95kg now. I'm doing weight training and cardio, then focusing on technique in class. I bruise like a peach, but my fitness has improved in leaps and bounds.'



he says. 'I'd say to them: don't walk in with a big head or a closed mind, because you'll be in for a hard night.'

Famous faces

MMA is a relatively new sport and this means that, without many exclusive training facilities available, you can easily find yourself training alongside the big names. You'll never get to knock up with Rafael Nadal or have a kickaround with Ryan Giggs, but some of MMA's top fighters regularly put on seminars and think nothing of grappling with newcomers. Depending on where you train, you might even end up in the same class as a well-known fighter.

If you do, Davenport recommends a cautious approach. 'Don't jump straight in and spar with the best guys. I don't want to train with beginners, because they'll swing wildly and they might cut me. Most experienced guys will be pulling their punches in training, but that won't last if you go all-out against them.'

As a side effect of getting schooled by the pros, you might find yourself overwhelmed by the sheer amount of moves involved in MMA. Paul Ivens, head coach at London Shootfighters, advises novices not to overtrain. 'Pros like to show off or intimidate their opponents, but usually they'll do two sessions a day at most,' he says. 'At first, aim for one technical session a day and one or two strength and conditioning sessions a week. Francis Heagney, who's currently [leading UK MMA body] UCMMA lightweight champion, works in a brokerage firm from 7am to 8pm most days, and fits

Pick and mix Which combination of styles is right for you?

Boxing

A good bet if you can't find a decent MMA-specific gym, although bear in mind that bobbing, weaving and covering up doesn't work as well when tiny gloves and knees to the face come into play.

Wrestling

In Olympic wrestling the object is to pin an opponent's shoulders to the mat, but in MMA wrestling it's usually used for takedowns. If you've played rugby before this might be the easiest transition for you.

Muay Thai

Since it involves fists, feet, elbows, knees and clinch work, Muay Thai can be the perfect introduction to MMA striking, although its traditional upright stance is vulnerable to takedowns.

Brazilian jiu jitsu

The grappling art practised by Royce Gracie. Most BJJ schools will expect you to train in a judo-style uniform called a *gi*, which theoretically makes your moves more reliant on technique than speed or power.

Submission wrestling

Schools that don't train in a *gi* usually offer submission wrestling instead. It has many of the same techniques as BJJ but makes training more MMA-specific.

Karate

The suitability of karate for MMA varies widely, but the likes of welterweight champion Georges St-Pierre and former light heavyweight champ Lyoto Machida have used it with some success. Make sure you find a style that allows full-contact sparring.

The first day

The first time you go to an MMA gym can be an intimidating experience. Lessen the stress by following Leicester Shootfighters' coach Nathan Leverton's advice

1 **Leave your ego at the door** 'There will be people much better than you. Some will be half your size. Don't beat yourself up over this. Everyone, even the best fighters in the world, started the same way. Enjoy the process and focus on improving, not beating people.'

2 **Relax** 'You'll hear new students getting told to relax constantly. This is because they often hold their breath, tense their whole body or try to throw every punch at full force. Pace yourself.'

3 **Be a good training partner** 'When learning new techniques or drilling, try to provide realistic but progressive resistance at a level where your partner can still do the move. The better you are as a training partner, the more people will want to work with you.'

4 **Tap!** 'When your partner has you in a painful submission or position, tap them several times with your hand to get them to let go. Don't be stubborn. Tapping and learning how to stop the move next time is a lot better than missing sessions while an avoidable injury heals.'

5 **Stick with it** 'There are no shortcuts, and the best people are those that have put in the consistent mat time. One or two sessions every week will be far more productive than a heavy week followed by a month off.'

The amateur

28-year old **Patrick McAuley** is training for his first amateur fight

'I started MMA about a year and a half ago. I never even watched *The Karate Kid* in the 1980s, so I thought there was no way I'd be able to fight. I just got into it for fitness. I went straight into MMA classes, although 12 Gauge MMA, where I train, divide classes into groundwork, fundamentals and standup. I got into sparring pretty much straight away. When our guys get ready to fight they rotate between five fresh training partners for a minute each, so they always need bodies. I'd volunteer and end up defending myself, but it was a good confidence boost to get me to sign up for a fight. I'm doing three technique sessions, two weight sessions and two bike sessions a week.'

his training around that while fighting at a high level.'

The next level

If you train hard for long enough, chances are you'll eventually start itching to have a fight. It's a good way to try what you've already learned, but more importantly it can provide a much-needed boost to your training. 'If you're worried about getting beaten up one on one, you probably won't skip training sessions,' says Davenport. 'You'd be amazed how easy it is to get up for an early run if you think your opponent is doing the same.'

Rules vary between organisations, but as a general guideline there are three levels of competition: amateur doesn't allow any strikes to the head or the more dangerous submission holds; semi-pro allows headshots only when standing up; and 'pro' follows essentially the same rules as the UFC. Although some people jump straight in at the pro level, more and more professional fighters are getting valuable experience on the amateur circuit.

'I put my guys in one semi-pro fight, to get them used to the crowd. If they don't panic, they're ready to go pro'

Duffy, who had 22 amateur and six semi-pro fights before going pro, thinks it stood him in good stead. 'It's hard to say any single way is best for everyone, but it was perfect for me,' he says. 'Take your time and enjoy the experience without

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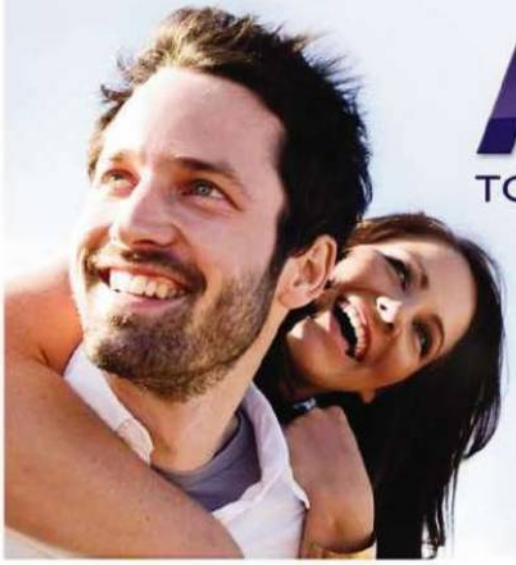

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One of the UK's longest-established training spots, Shootfighters is home to rising UFC star John Hathaway.
londonshootfighters.com

URBAN KINGS
London
This upmarket gym offers serious training courtesy of veteran fighter Pete Irving and multiple BJJ champion Leo Nagao.
urbankingsgym.com

The pro

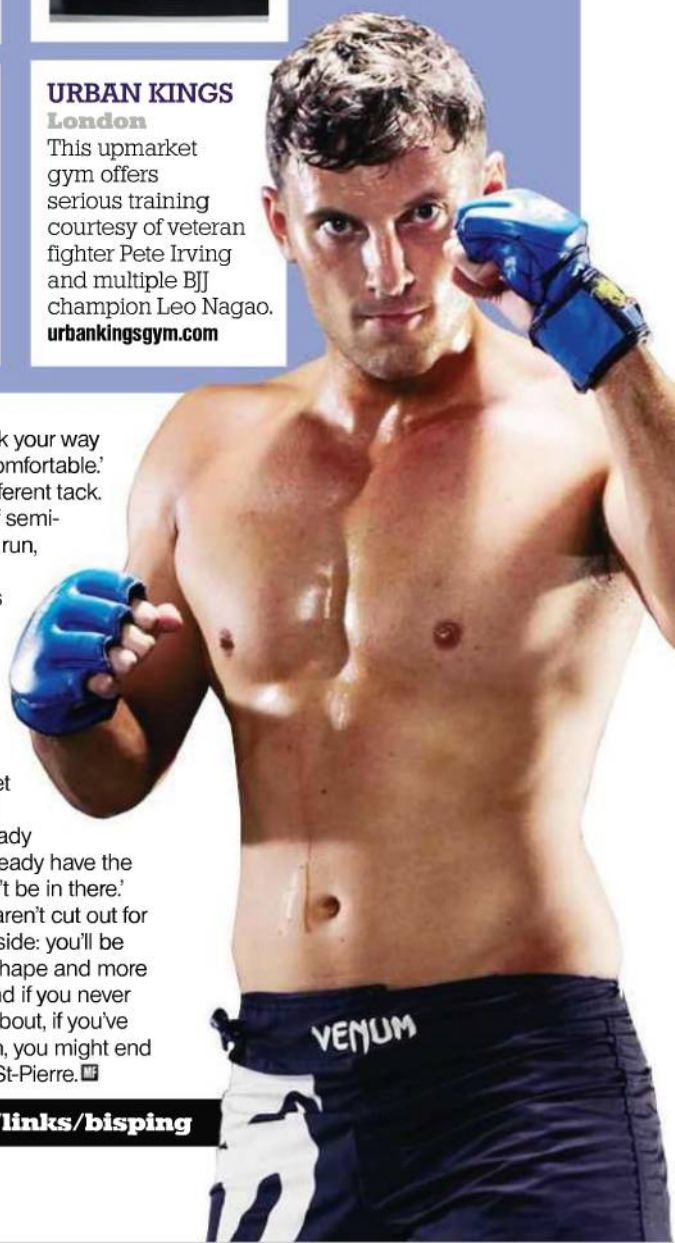
22-year-old **Paul Sass** has won all ten of his pro fights and makes his UFC debut in October

'I started training when I was 16, when a mate of mine who knew [UFC fighter] Terry Etim asked me to go along to the Kaobon gym. At first I was doing Brazilian jiu jitsu and submissions came pretty naturally to me – I had my first couple of amateur fights after about a year and won one by triangle choke. I only had one semi-pro fight but I think I could have used the experience of more – not just because you're getting punched in the face, but because the crowds are bigger so you've got more of an adrenaline rush to deal with. I went pro in 2007, but I've only really started taking strength and conditioning seriously recently. I've only just got a manager too. Before that, my coaches were organising my fights with local promoters.'

rushing into anything. Work your way up, and you'll always be comfortable.'

Ivens takes a slightly different tack. 'I'm not always a big fan of semi-pro fights – some are well run, but others are a way for promoters to fill their cards with fights without paying anyone. Amateurs are a good way to get some experience without too much pressure, but I'll usually only put my guys in one semi-pro fight, to get them used to the crowd. If they don't panic, they're ready to go pro – if they don't already have the skills to do it, they shouldn't be in there.'

Even if you decide you aren't cut out for competition, there's an upside: you'll be more confident, in better shape and more able to defend yourself. And if you never get around to a real MMA bout, if you've been training hard enough, you might end up with abs like Georges St-Pierre.



Get fight ready with our UFC workout at **mensfitness.co.uk/links/bisping**

Name: iwantpants.com

Occupation: Designer men's underwear and swimwear

Iwantpants.com is the answer to all your underwear needs. With over 550 different types of designer pants to choose from, we have it covered.

Our unique designer collections guarantee style, comfort and fit with the additional bonus of FREE UK delivery. Whether it's Calvin Klein you're after or the latest luxury Swiss cotton by Zimmerli, we are simply a click away. We pride ourselves on providing the best customer service and any orders placed before 4pm will be dispatched that day.

Neon pants! Star pants! Superhero pants! Camouflage pants! Glow-in-the-dark pants! Sourcing the latest fashion underwear is our talent and we pride ourselves on being the largest stockist of the über-cool Ginch Gonch underwear range from Canada. New Calvin Klein fashion stock arrives regularly and your favourite pants are available in a range of coloured waist-bands and prints. Choose from bright prints and block colours with Björn Borg and DT Underwear from Australia.

We also stock trunks, briefs, jockstraps, boxer briefs, vests, bottoms, gowns, long johns and swimwear as well as body-sculpting tops and core precision undershirts from Equmen.

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

Name: Bodylean

Occupation: Fast fat loss and more muscle tone

BODY BEAUTIFUL
Bodylean® CLA Plus to help your workout work well.

Bodylean® CLA Plus can help reduce body fat and in turn increase muscle tone. Conjugated Linoleic Acid is added to manipulate the way the body stores fat and helps you utilise it as energy, regulating and lowering body fat percentages and increasing muscle tone. Other ingredients include L-Carnitine, L-Ornithine and CoQ10 for enhanced metabolism, together with Chromium and Gymnaema Sylvestre to regulate sugar cravings and blood sugar levels. Maximum benefit is achieved if it is taken in conjunction with a healthy balanced diet and regular exercise.

HealthAid®

■ **More info:** Bodylean CLA Plus dual pack retails at £15.99 for 60 capsules and tablets. Contact HealthAid Ltd on 020 8426 3400 for purchase and stockist information or visit www.healthaid.co.uk.

Name: Pharma Nord

Occupation: Boosting your sex life

PRELOX, a unique combination of natural ingredients pycnogenol and L-Arginine, may help to sustain blood flow to the genitals of men suffering from erectile problems.

Nutritionist Gareth Zeal says, 'Prelox may also work for people with overactive sex lives or who just want to boost a healthy sex life.

'One of the main reasons men get erectile problems is that the blood flow isn't what it used to be. It can also be caused by elevated cholesterol levels or stress due to busy, overactive lifestyles.

'The L-Arginine and pycnogenol in Prelox will help blood flow to the extremities, in this case the genitalia. Two to four capsules a day for about a month should produce a noticeable effect.

'In fact, there are several side benefits. L-Arginine could lower your cholesterol and indirectly help with blood pressure in the long term. And you may also get more elastic skin from the pycnogenol.'

Prelox contains two naturally occurring substances, L-Arginine and pycnogenol. It is the unique interaction between these ingredients that may help to maintain healthy blood flow to the genital area.

Pharma Nord
Because your body deserves the best

Name: AsdruMark

Occupation: Stylish and comfortable underwear for men

The Mundo Unico Summer Underwear Collection is packed with great designs that offer excellent support, comfort and style that you would expect from Mundo Unico. Amazing fit, quality fabrics and unstructured patterns make Mundo Unico underwear the foundation of a fashionable wardrobe. Styles available include briefs, athletic long leg boxers, shorts and tanga. The benefits are:

Genital Care: The innovative 'suspensor' helps maintain the anatomical position of the genitals and keeps them cool by separating them from the body.

Aesthetic: The suspensor supports the genitals thus enhancing body definition and the man's anatomy.

Unstructured Patterns: The unstructured patterns of Mundo Unico do not follow regular male underwear patterns – they aid movement and become a second skin, offer excellent support and are ideal for both sport and everyday wear.

■ **More info:** To obtain a mail order catalogue call **0844 561 7970** or sign up for our e-newsletter online at **www.asdrumark.co.uk**.

SURVIVAL OF THE QUICKEST

When it's your health and well being, only the best is good enough. Lifesytems First Aid Kits are legendary, for 20 years they have been helping people get back on their feet, whether it's on the hills or on their travels. Products are clearly labelled for quick access, so even when it is survival of the quickest, you have a brand you can trust.

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www.lifesystems.co.uk

GearHound

Gear edited by **Ben Ince**
Grooming edited by **Hayley Thatcher**

+Tracking down the best kit for active men

+All out action

Record your exploits in high definition whatever the weather

The pocket-sized Xacti CA100 is a rugged, user-friendly camera that can capture high-quality stills and video in all conditions. It's waterproof up to 3m and can shoot both full-HD footage and 14-megapixel hi-res images simultaneously. Its pistol-grip handle makes for easy filming on the move – it's even suited to use while on skis ora snowboard – while its MP4 recording format enables direct wireless uploading to websites such as YouTube and Facebook.

Sanyo Xacti CA100 £349
uk.sanyo.com

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

Sports earphones

Don't miss a beat while you're running or training

1 Philips SHQ4000 £39.99
With a sturdy lightweight band that sits comfortably on your neck, these earphones will stay secure no matter how tough your workout gets, delivering a clear, crisp sound with excellent bottom end. They're also very hygienic, thanks to an anti-bacterial agent injected into the ear buds, which Philips claims will kill 99.8 per cent of all bacteria.
THE GOOD Comfortable and reliable.
THE BAD The neck band limits their use with helmets.
philips.co.uk

2 Bose IE2 £89
The stylish and comfortable IE2 from audio specialist Bose has an enhanced acoustic design that gives a natural, warm sound and provides excellent clarity and detail on high-end frequencies. They also fit extremely well thanks to silicone fins that sit snugly inside your upper ear, making them very difficult to dislodge.
THE GOOD Stylish, durable and comfortable with excellent sound quality.
THE BAD Not the cheapest, but you get what you pay for.
bose.co.uk

3 JVC HA-EB75 £12.99
These cheap and cheerful earphones from JVC have an adjustable ear-clip with five different settings to provide a secure, if slightly uncomfortable fit. While their design and sound quality is impressive, considering the price, the plastic clips and cable lack the durability of some of their more expensive rivals, meaning you'll want to upgrade sooner rather than later.
THE GOOD Great value for money.
THE BAD Comfort isn't high up on the list with these earphones.
jvc.co.uk

4 Panasonic RP-HS200 £24.99
The side-mounted speaker design provides a rich mid- to high-range sound and a deep, tight bass to really get your adrenaline pumping while you train. They've also got flexible hangers that sit comfortably around your ear and help to minimise cord touch noise, while a water-resistant design keeps them protected no matter how much you sweat.
THE GOOD Reasonably priced with great sound quality.
THE BAD The cable isn't the most robust.
panasonic.co.uk

Words **Ben Ince** Photography **Danny Bird**

We've tested even more earphones for you – read the reviews at **mensfitness.co.uk/links/hearmenow**

5 Sennheiser/Adidas CX 680 £79.99

Not only do these sound great, they're also extremely comfortable, thanks to a pair of rubber fins that slot into the upper ridge of your ear and hold them firmly in place while you train. Their durable, waterproof design means you can wash them after your workout, while a series of useful additions – including a volume control on the clip – make them very practical.

THE GOOD Great all-round earphones for active use.

THE BAD Nothing, in truth.

sennheiser.co.uk

6 Sony MDR-AS50G £34.99

These earphones sound great when properly fitted, but getting them to stay in position can be difficult because of the neck band, which curls awkwardly and doesn't offer any adjustability. The cable comes equipped with a clip to prevent it from dangling and a detachable extender, but the overall build quality feels fairly flimsy.

THE GOOD Sound quality is clear and crisp.

THE BAD Let down by impractical neck band and poor design.

sony.co.uk

7 AKG K 316 £29.99

While malleable, lightweight hangers give these earphones a very secure fit and help to reduce cable noise, the buds themselves are particularly large, making it difficult to get a comfortable fit depending on the size of your ear. On the upside, their robust design also includes a handy inline volume control and a gold-plated jack plug that's compatible with all iPhones.

THE GOOD Sturdy and secure.

THE BAD Chunky buds won't fit everyone.

akg.com

8 Skullcandy Asym £39.99

While the over-the-ear cable fitting won't be to everybody's taste, their tonal range is impressive and their slick design and variety of colours will appeal to the fashion-conscious gym-goer. As an added bonus, the volume control on the cable features a built-in mute button for minimal hassle when you want to stop for a chat.

THE GOOD Stylish and practical.

THE BAD The cable over the ear takes some getting used to.

uk.skullcandy.com

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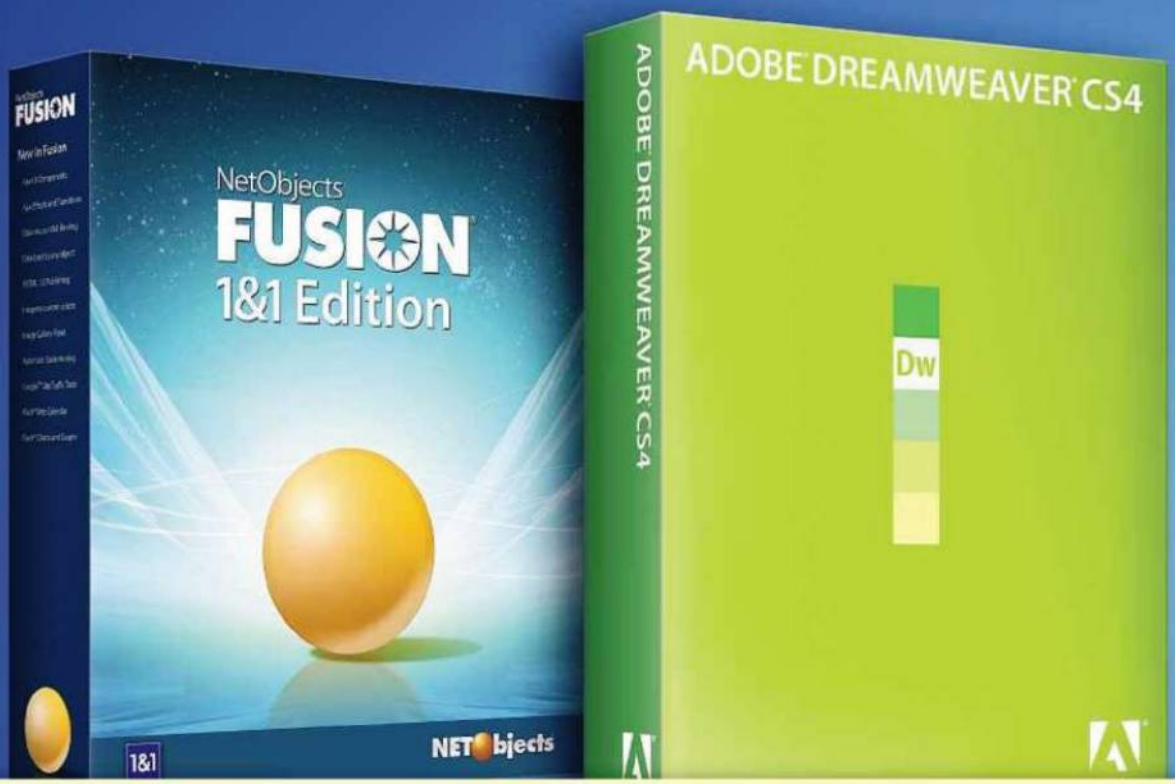

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Helmets

Because you never want to stop putting your head in danger

1 Best for **road cycling**

Giro Ionos, £159.99

While it's not the lightest or cheapest helmet on the market, the Ionos offers unrivalled ventilation, thanks to 21 enormous Wind Tunnel vents that maximise air flow across your head to ensure a cool ride. By moulding the body of the helmet to a composite framework, Giro has also been able to provide full-depth temple and scalp coverage for a protected and universally comfortable fit.

giro.com

2 Best for **mountain biking**

Lazer Excalibur, £109.99

This stylish, full-face offering from Belgian outfit Lazer – officially the oldest cycle helmet manufacturer in the world – features an adjustable visor and a reinforced fibreglass composite shell with 16 air vents for improved ventilation and protection. It's also very comfortable, thanks to a detachable and washable interior that adjusts to fit your head, while an overall weight of only 1kg means it won't slow you down on the trails.

lazerhelmets.com

3 Best for **climbing**

Petzl Meteor III, £69.95

Weighing in at a mere 235g, the Meteor III is one of the lightest climbing helmets available. With excellent ventilation, it's equally at home at the local crags as on long alpine routes, while its innovative adjustment system means almost anybody can get a comfortable fit. The headband adjuster also folds into the shell for compact storage and easy transportation.

petzl.com

4 Best for **kayaking**

Sweet Rocker Fullcut, £159.99

The carbon fibre reinforced shell of the Rocker will keep your head safe in the choppiest of waters, with its removable ear pads and injection-moulded ABS visor providing extended coverage and protection. It's pleasing to the eye too, thanks to a slick design and a tasteful range of colours.

sweetprotection.com

5 Best for **snowboarding**

RED Prime, £140

With most snowboard helmets, the only way to get a good fit is to remove padding and adjust the chin strap, often sacrificing protection. The Prime solves this by fitting an inflatable band around the circumference that you can adjust with a pump system on the ear pads. It also has a handle-controlled ventilation system at the front to keep your head at a comfortable temperature.

burton.com

Words **Ben Ince** Photography **Danny Bird**

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** Calls cost 6p per minute from a BT landline, calls from other operators and mobiles may be higher.

Save your skin

Remedy some common skin problems with expert advice and effective treatments

The problem
Oily skin

You might think oily skin means you're not washing enough. That's not the case. 'Oily skin is a result of increased oil gland activity,' says dermatologist Dr Nick Lowe (drnicklowe.com). 'Recent research suggests that people who eat a lot of high-GI foods have oilier skin.'

The fix

Cut out refined carbs and slap on Kyoku For Men Lava Masque (£24 for 142g, kyokuformen.com). Once that's washed off, apply Origins Zero Oil (£21 for 50ml, origins.co.uk), to moisturise your face.

The problem
Dry skin

Going to the gym regularly is good for your muscles but not necessarily for your skin. 'Showering constantly can dry out your skin,' says Lowe. 'Dry skin is also a genetic predisposition but it often gets worse in winter.'

The fix

'Use a good moisturiser, one that contains humectants such as glycerine or hyaluronic acid,' says Lowe. Aesop Carmellia Nut Facial Hydrating Cream (£31 for 120ml, mankind.co.uk) is an intensely hydrating option.

The problem
Skin blemishes

Skin blemishes – or spots – are caused by oil build-up. 'The oil gland is like an oil well,' says Lowe. 'When that oil well is capped you get a build-up of oil that allows the acne bacteria to grow.'

The fix

'An anti-blemish product will unlock the plugged oil duct, reduce inflamed skin and reduce surface oil,' says Lowe. Clinique Anti-Blemish Solutions Cleansing Foam (£13 for 125ml, clinique.co.uk) will do all three of those.

The problem
Skin redness

'Redness can be caused by enlarged blood vessels in the skin,' says Lowe. If you go red in the face for no reason in particular, take action.

The fix

'A calming cream containing arnica and chamomile reduces the degree of enlargement of the blood vessels,' says Lowe. His own Redness Relief Calming Cream (£14.99 for 50ml) and Maurad's Redness Therapy Recovery Treatment Gel (£40.95 for 50ml, murad.co.uk) will help.

For top anti-ageing tips, go to **mensfitness.co.uk/links/secretofyouth**

FRAGRANCE OF THE MONTH

Bang by Marc Jacobs

This is the first new men's fragrance from designer Marc Jacobs in nearly a decade. It's a spicy, woody scent, thanks to the black, pink and white peppercorns, mixed with elemi resinoid, vetiver and patchouli. Jacobs is no shrinking violet and this is a confident scent that lives up to its name.

£49 for 100ml

Available nationwide

WHAT'S NEW

Kings grooming

New grooming brand Kings features three ranges that champion contemporary British style. Faraday's line-up of five products is aimed at the modern, sharply dressed gent, scented with black peppercorn and sandalwood. Kielder is for the rock god in you, and is duly heavy on hair products. Meanwhile, Hayward is sporty and includes a citrusy shower gel and body spray to invigorate and energise.

From £2.99

Available at Boots

Words **Hayley Thatcher** Photography **Danny Bird, PSC Photography**

ON TEST

Anti-ageing moisturisers

Stave off wrinkles with these intense skin hydrators

GoodSkin Labs Filextra Facial Revolumizing Treatment

£27 for 50ml

Although this light, unscented cream feels grainy, it leaves your skin feeling incredibly soft.

boots.com

Lab Series Max LS Age-less Face Cream

£45 for 50ml

This has an impressive moisturising effect and does seem to smooth skin out and mask fine lines, without leaving your face shiny and greasy.

Available nationwide

Molton Brown Skin-Firm Lipoamino Hydrator

£35 for 50ml

This gel-cream moisturiser definitely tightens up skin after application. It's quite light and not greasy, making it a good choice for people with oily skin.

moltonbrown.co.uk

La Prairie Anti-Aging Day Cream SPF 30

£117 for 50ml

With its stylish packaging and rich texture this is a perfect choice for post-shave moisturising. The thick consistency means a little goes a long way and it improves skin texture noticeably.

laprairie.com

Biotherm Homme Force Supreme Neutralizer

£41 for 40ml

This smells like a rich, ferny aftershave, comes in a stylish dispenser and is reassuringly thick. The skin absorbs it well and is left feeling nourished and looking fresh.

biotherm.co.uk

Going for gold

Britain's Andy Turner won gold in the 110m hurdles at this summer's European championships, and PhD Nutrition is fuelling his charge for Olympic glory at London 2012

Ranked number one in the continent going into this year's European championships, British hurdler Andy Turner lived up to all expectations in Barcelona to take gold in the 110m hurdles. No one was surprised by his success, least of all Turner himself, thanks to his meticulous approach to both training and nutrition.

'My training has never gone so well and PhD Nutrition products have given me a new lease of life,' says Turner. 'The supplements I take have enabled me to recover faster, I am noticeably stronger and far more explosive, which is an essential attribute to have in an event such as the 110m hurdles.'

Train like a champion

To build the speed, strength and explosive power needed to dominate his discipline, Turner's training is based on three solid foundations. He does big lifts – bench presses, squats and cleans – to build power, track circuits for speed, and plyometric box jumps to increase the explosiveness that makes him a world-class hurdler.

'I have to train hard every session to stay at the very top of my sport,' says Turner. 'To ensure I have the energy and nutrition I need to train hard and recover fast, I use PhD Supplements. There's nothing like them to keep me firing on all fronts.'

Train like Turner

These hardcore sessions made Turner a European champion

Monday am: Weights
Strength: Five sets of ten reps of clean, high pull, bench press and squat, followed by core stability work
Monday pm: Track
Power: Bounds and plyometrics workout

Tuesday: Track
Speed: Hurdles session, six runs over 12 hurdles, followed by sprint drills

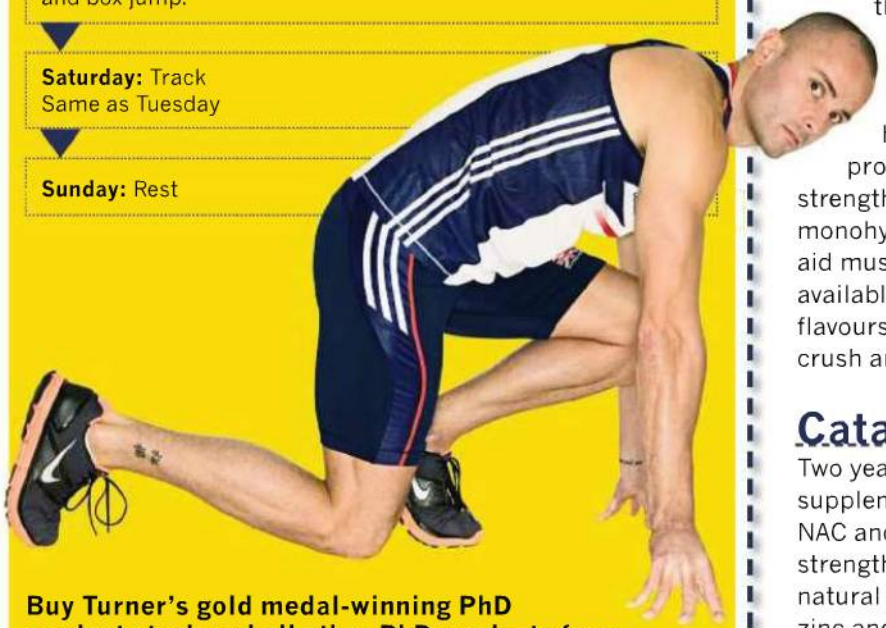
Wednesday: Weights
Same as Monday

Thursday: Track
Speed: 5 x 300m, followed by short sprint drills

Friday: Weights
Strength: Huge circuit session: six sets (with no rest) of press-up, sit-up, star jump, squat, burpee, squat thrust and box jump.

Saturday: Track
Same as Tuesday

Sunday: Rest



Buy Turner's gold medal-winning PhD product stack and all other PhD products from www.phd-supplements.com. Also watch the PhD product videos and join our great forum

Eat like a champion

Turner's daily diet gives him the fuel to train hard and the nutrition to recover fast

Breakfast Bran flakes, PhD Pharma Whey (one scoop)
Pre-session snack PhD V-Max Pump (one serving)
During sessions PhD BCAAs
Post-session snack PhD Recovery 2:1 (one serving)
Lunch Chicken sandwich or chicken pasta
Afternoon snack Fruit with Pharma Whey (one scoop)
Dinner Chicken or steak with rice or potatoes and fresh vegetables
Pre-bed snack Pharma Blend 6HR (one serving)

PhD Nutrition

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

Pharma Whey

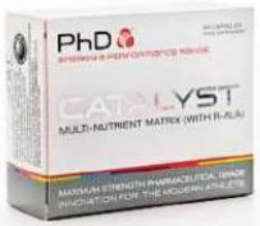
With 20g of the highest-quality protein per serving to promote muscle tissue repair and growth, Pharma Whey provides added BCAAs and L-Glutamine, the essential amino acids needed to build new muscle. Pharma Whey is also high in antioxidants to support the body's immune system. It's available in five delicious flavours: banana, vanilla crème, chocolate cookie, chocolate mint and strawberry crème.

Recovery 2:1

Designed for serious athletes, Recovery 2:1 provides the perfect post-workout ratio of fast-release and slow-release carbohydrates to replenish energy. Each serving provides 24g of high-quality whey protein for increased strength, while creatine monohydrate and L-Glutamine aid muscle recovery. It's available in three refreshing flavours: berry blast, orange crush and lemon crush.

Catalyst

Two years in development, Catalyst is the ultimate supplement for highly active people. Containing NAC and R-ALA – two key antioxidants needed by strength athletes – and natural plant extracts with zinc and magnesium to ensure optimum health, strength and wellbeing, Catalyst redefines the way we support our overworked immune system.



V-Max Pump

For the ultimate workout you need the ultimate pre-workout drink. Each serving of V-Max Pump provides your muscles with what they need to power through even the toughest of sessions thanks to its potent blend of creatine, glutamine and BCAAs that create the perfect conditions for building size, strength and power.

MET-Rx®

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TO FIND THE PRODUCTS.

MET-Rx products are available nationwide at all good health food and sports nutrition stores, gyms and mail order outlets.

For your nearest stockists call 0870 112 1893.

www.metrx.co.uk

Fit For Life

Everything you need to get fitter, faster

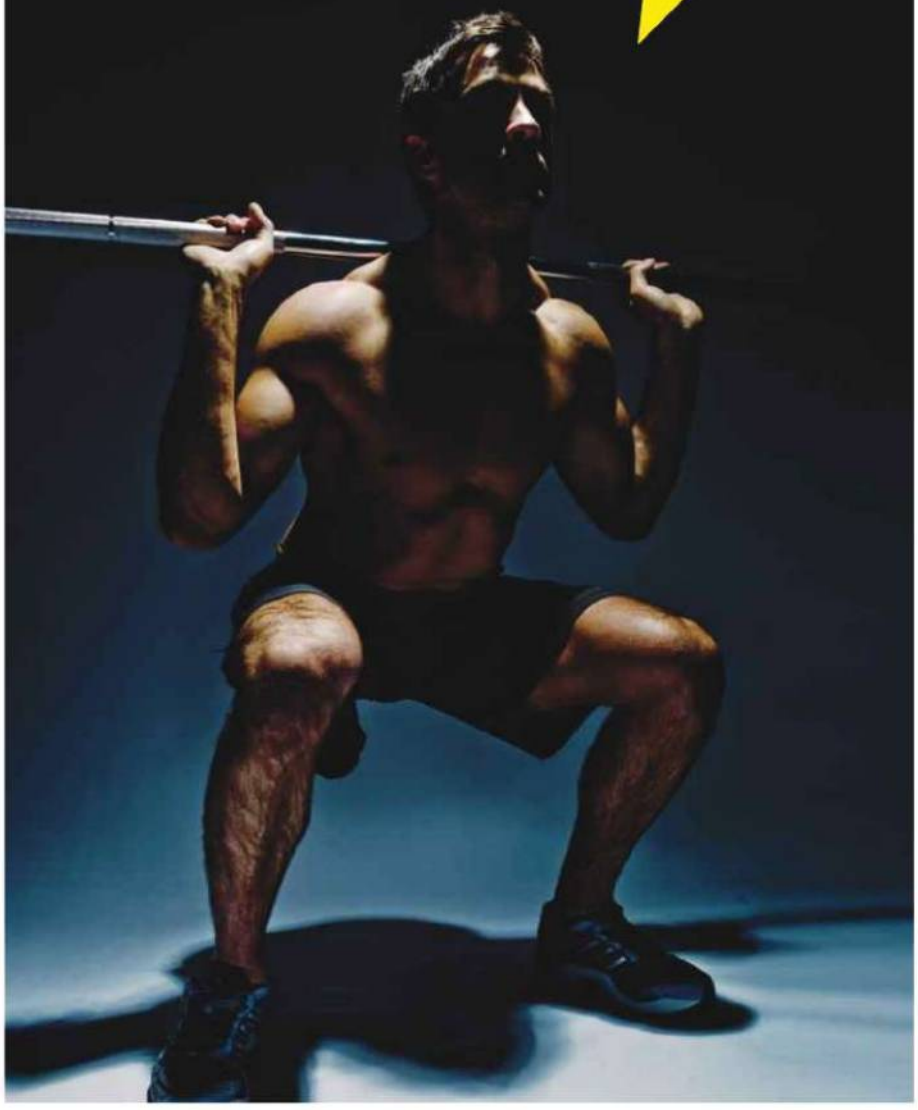
Edited by **Lucy Miller**

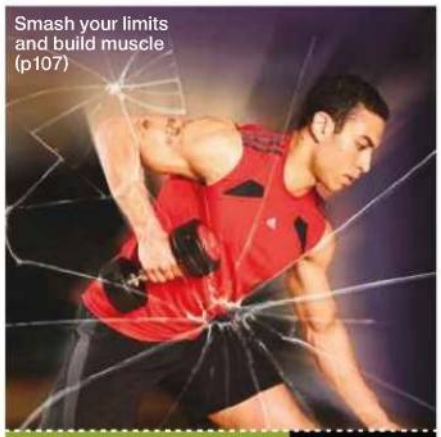
Power up with squats

TRAINING TIP

Most people warm up with some cardio – but you can boost your explosive power by adding a squat to your warm-up. Functional isometric exercises such as pause squats can enhance your power output, according to a study published in the *Journal Of Strength And Conditioning Research*.

Subjects performed a vertical jump test after warming up with either a five-minute cycle or a five-minute cycle and a three-second functional isometric squat (this involves squatting down and pausing at the bottom of the move). Those who performed the squat recorded a five per cent improvement in their vertical jump, while those who had only cycled showed no significant difference. The study concluded that adding functional isometrics to a warm-up significantly enhances short-term power output.





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Boost your metabolism to burn more fat (p129)

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Improve **performance** 139-152

Words **Joe Warner** Photography **Danny Bird**

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RESTORE MUSCLES

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Abbott Nutrition

Gym'll fix it

Mend common workout problems with these additions to your training toolkit and see incredble muscle gains

We know you've got excellent intentions when it comes to working out. The trouble is, life has a nasty habit of making it difficult to stick to those intentions. Life swallows your time so you're too busy to exercise, or it fills your gym with annoying, sweaty people that get in the way of you using your favourite kit. The answer isn't to skip your session and hope things will be better next time. No, it's to use one of our new problem-solving workouts. Whether you're short on time, space or kit, we've got a routine that will keep your exercise progress on track.

Words **Jon Lipsey** Photography **Glen Burrows** Model **Toby Rowland@WAthletic**

THE PROBLEM

'I HAVEN'T GOT TIME TO TRAIN'

THE SOLUTION

SUPER-CHARGED CIRCUITS

Not having enough time to train is one of the most common reasons to avoid a workout. The simple fact is you don't need to spend ages in the gym to be doing something productive. 'People work out for too long anyway,' says Gideon Remfry, fitness manager at top London gym KX (kxgym.co.uk). 'If you're short on time the important thing is to work at a high intensity with strict form, because you can't do that for long.' The beginner's version of this workout will take approximately 12 minutes, with the intermediate one lasting just 18 minutes. Because you're only using one item of kit, an Olympic bar, you won't waste time between exercises. The moves alternate between upper- and lower-body exercises, so you can keep the intensity high.

Circuits
Beginners should do three circuits, intermediates four and advanced exercisers should do six.

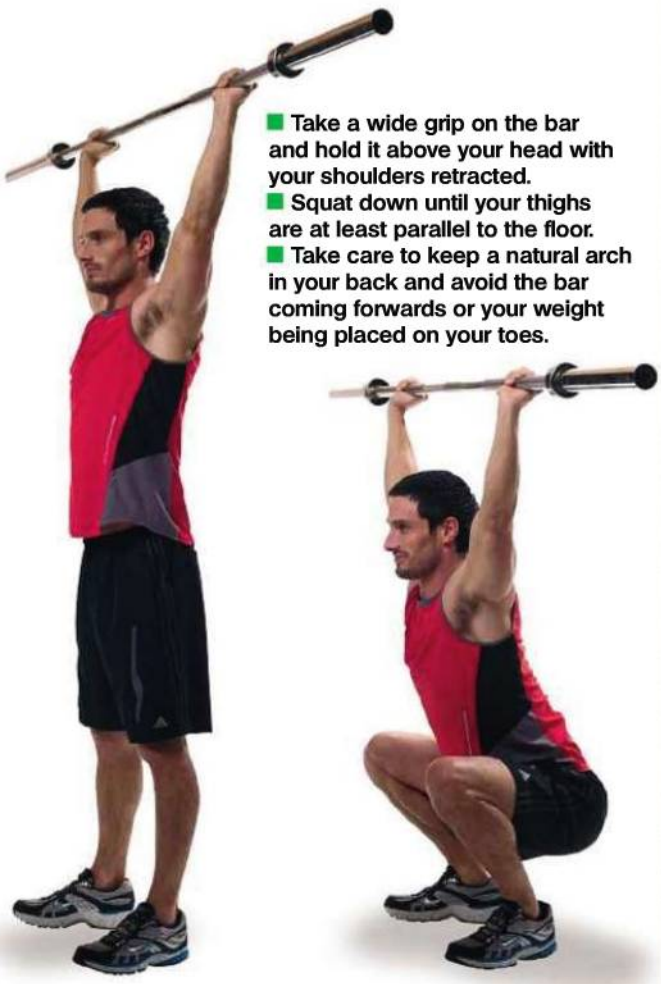
Rest
Take minimal rest between exercises and rest for two minutes between circuits.

Weight
Use a 20kg Olympic bar. As you get stronger you can add more weight.

Exercise 1

Overhead squat

Reps 10



- Take a wide grip on the bar and hold it above your head with your shoulders retracted.
- Squat down until your thighs are at least parallel to the floor.
- Take care to keep a natural arch in your back and avoid the bar coming forwards or your weight being placed on your toes.

Exercise 2

Behind neck press

Reps 10

- Rest the bar on your shoulders with your hands wider than shoulder-width apart.
- Press the bar directly overhead then return to the start.

Exercise 3

Romanian deadlift

Reps 10

- Hold the bar just outside your thighs and retract your shoulders.
- Keeping a natural arch in your back, bend forwards at the hips to send the bar down the front of your legs.
- Go down as far as you can until you feel a strong stretch in your hamstrings then return to the start.

Exercise 4

Bent-over row

Reps 10

- With your knees unlocked, bend at the hips and let the bar hang straight down.
- Keeping your upper body still, pull the bar up to your sternum.

Exercise 5

Squat jumps

Reps 5

- Rest the bar on the back of your shoulders.
- Sink down into a squat then jump up explosively so your feet leave the ground.
- As you land, sink down into the next rep without pausing.

THE PROBLEM

'THE GYM'S PACKED'

THE SOLUTION

THE WEIGHT PLATE WORKOUT

It's infuriatingly common to get to the gym only to find a queue for the bench press, some selfish sod hogging all the dumb-bells you need and, worse, someone else doing biceps curls in the squat rack. When you're met with that scene, grab two 10kg weight plates, find yourself a corner and do this routine. Rather than working pure strength, as you would while doing a heavy bench press, these moves will build strength and dynamic flexibility. 'This basically means being strong and flexible when you're moving,' says Remfry. 'It'll carry over really well to sport and when you go back to lifting heavy weights.'

Sets
Beginners: three sets of each exercise. Intermediates: four. Advanced: five.

Rest
Perform each pair of exercises as a superset – so do one set of exercise 1a and then one set of 1b without resting. Rest for 60-90sec between supersets.

Weight
Use two 10kg plates for most exercises. Use one 10kg plate for 2b and 3a.

Exercise 1a

Overhead squat

Reps 10-12

- Hold both plates above your head with your shoulders retracted.
- Squat down until your thighs are at least parallel to the floor.
- Take care to keep a natural arch in your back and avoid the plates coming forwards or your weight being placed on your toes.

Exercise 1b

Romanian deadlift to overhead swing

Reps 20

- Hold both plates and bend forward at the hips, and bend your legs slightly to send the plates down between your legs.
- In an explosive movement, straighten up and raise the plates up in front of you until your arms are nearly above your head.
- Control the movement back to the start and repeat.

Exercise 2a

Overhead press from chest

Reps 10-12

- Hold both plates at the top of your chest.
- Contract your abs and press the plates directly overhead.

Exercise 2b

Clean to rotating press

Reps 20

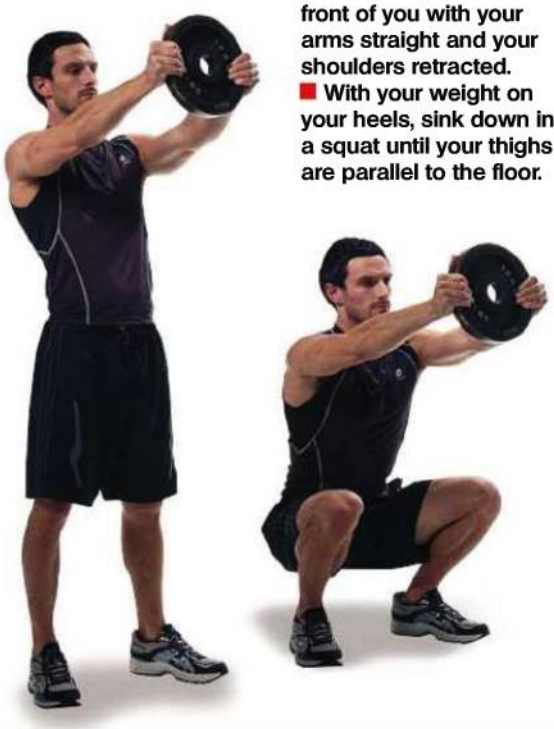
- Hold one plate at waist height, then perform a clean by pulling it up and flipping it over to 'catch' it at chest height.
- Press the plate overhead while rotating to one side, alternating sides with each rep.

Exercise 3a

Front squat

Reps 6-8

- Hold one plate out in front of you with your arms straight and your shoulders retracted.
- With your weight on your heels, sink down into a squat until your thighs are parallel to the floor.



Exercise 3b

Bent-over row

Reps 10-12

- With your knees unlocked, bend at the hips and let the plates hang straight down.
- Keeping your upper body still, pull the plates up to your sternum.

THE PROBLEM

'I DON'T HAVE ANY KIT'

THE SOLUTION

USE YOUR BODYWEIGHT

Just because you don't have access to any gym kit doesn't mean you're off the exercise hook. You permanently carry around a heavy, versatile weight that you can use to build muscle – your own body. This gear-free workout is an effective way to train when you don't have access to gym facilities. 'With this you'll do a challenging full-body strength move followed by a flexibility move working an area that men are tight in, such as the hamstrings, hip flexors and upper traps,' says Remfry. Flexibility probably isn't high up your list of fitness priorities but these moves, says Remfry, 'will give you an increased range of motion, which will allow you to recruit more muscle fibres and get stronger'.

Sets
Beginners: three sets of each exercise. Intermediates: four. Advanced: five.

Reps
Do ten reps of each exercise each set. Do ten reps each side for the squats.

Rest
Perform each pair of exercises as a superset – so do one set of exercise 1a and then one set of 1b without resting. Rest for 60-90sec between supersets.

Exercise 1a

Handstand press-up

- Plant your hands on the floor 60cm away from a wall and walk your feet up until your body is in a straight line.
- Lower your body towards the floor by bending at the elbows then push back up to the start.

If you can't push back up to the start either do a static hold in the up position or just do the lowering phase, walking your feet up the wall each rep.

Exercise 1b

Downward dog to upward dog

- Start with your hands and knees on the floor then go on to your toes before straightening your legs, so your backside is in the air and your body forms an inverted V.
- Return to the start then simultaneously thrust your hips forward to straighten your legs and arch your spine, so your body is upright and your arms are straight.

Lacking motivation? We've got the tools to fix that too. Go to **mensfitness.co.uk/links/bored nomore**

Exercise 2a

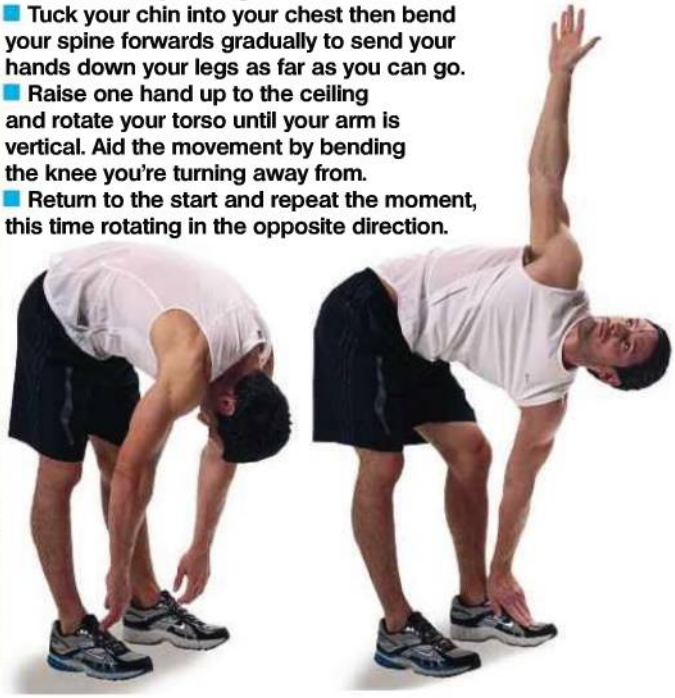
Assisted pistol squat

- Holding on to something for balance, perform a squat by lifting one leg off the floor in front of you and sinking down until the thigh on your other leg is parallel to the floor.
- Return to the start and complete all your reps on that leg before switching sides.

Exercise 2b

Alternate forward bend rotation

- Stand up straight with your hands on the front of your thighs.
- Tuck your chin into your chest then bend your spine forwards gradually to send your hands down your legs as far as you can go.
- Raise one hand up to the ceiling and rotate your torso until your arm is vertical. Aid the movement by bending the knee you're turning away from.
- Return to the start and repeat the moment, this time rotating in the opposite direction.



Exercise 3a

Plank walkout

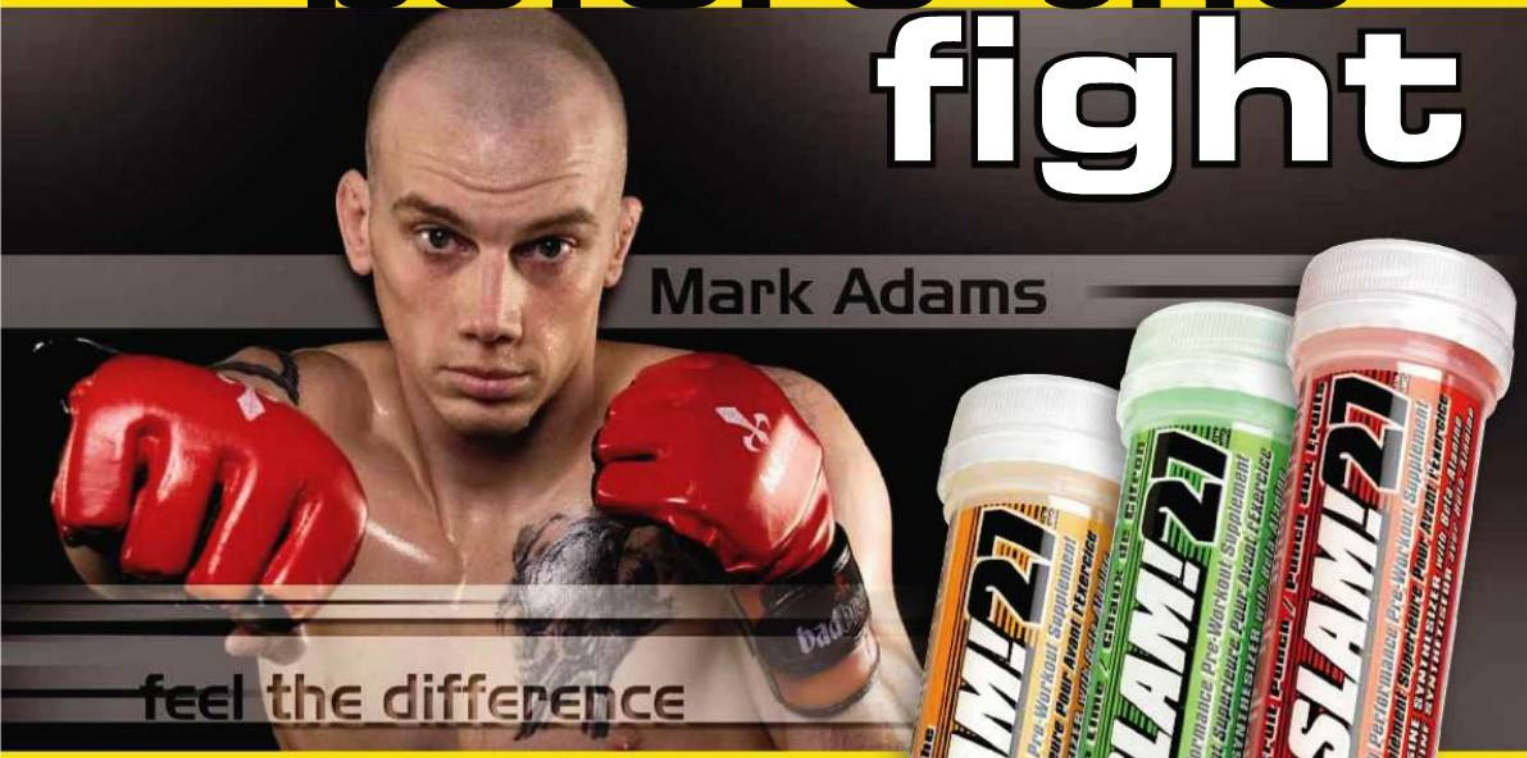
- Get into the start of a press-up position with your hands shoulder-width apart, beneath your shoulders.
- Walk your hands forwards slowly, keeping your back flat.
- Go as far as you can without letting your hips sag, then walk your hands back to the start.

Exercise 3b

Back bend

- Start with your backside on the floor, your feet on the floor and your palms on the floor with your elbows pointing up.
- Raise your backside off the floor as high as possible so that your body forms an arch.

before the fight



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Pots of muscle

Throw food in a pan, cook, eat. Your muscle-building meals made simple

Boston baked beans Serves 4-6

Ingredients
- 400g dried haricot beans
- 3 onions, quartered
- 5 cloves
- 800g pork belly, rind removed and cut into 3-4cm cubes
- 60g brown sugar
- 50g black treacle
- 50g ketchup
- 1tbsp English mustard
- 2tbsp red wine vinegar
- Freshly ground black pepper

Method

Soak the beans in water overnight. The next day, rinse the beans, put them in an ovenproof pan and cover with water. Bring to the boil, then simmer for about 40 minutes until nearly tender, making sure the beans are covered at all times. Preheat the oven to 160°C/Gas Mark 3.

Stud some onion quarters with the cloves and add these to the pot with the pork, sugar, treacle, ketchup, mustard, vinegar and black pepper. Cover the pan and place in the oven for 2½ to three hours until the beans are soft and the pork is tender.

Pork
Lean pork is naturally low in fat and high in muscle-building protein. Its antioxidant alpha-lipoic acid lowers blood sugar levels, which facilitates fat-burning.

Beans
Beans are a great source of fibre and keep you feeling fuller for longer. A natural source of protein and zinc, they raise your levels of the muscle-building and fat-burning hormone testosterone.

Onions
Full of vitamin C, an antioxidant that protects muscle cells, onions enhance muscle recovery and growth. They also contain B vitamins required for metabolising carbs into energy.

Ghanaian chicken and peanut stew Serves 4

Ingredients
- 8 chicken thighs
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 4tbsp olive oil
- 1 red onion, thinly sliced
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 3cm ginger, peeled and finely chopped
- 2 hot chillies
- 2 bay leaves
- 2tsp paprika
- 200g can chopped tomatoes
- 150g chunky peanut butter
- 250ml chicken stock

To serve
- Brown rice (optional)

Method

Season the chicken with salt and black pepper. Heat the oil in a pan and brown the chicken on a moderate heat for five minutes until nicely golden. Turn the thighs over, seal the other side for a couple of minutes and set them aside. Cook in two batches if necessary.

Cook the onion gently in the pan for five minutes or until starting to soften. Add the garlic, ginger, chillies and bay leaves and cook gently for another five minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the paprika. Add the tomatoes and return the pan to the heat.

Cook for a couple of minutes before adding the peanut butter and stock with some salt and pepper. Stir well to make sure the peanut butter is mixed in. Return the chicken thighs to the pan. Cover and cook gently for 25-30 minutes, stirring regularly.

Chicken
Low-fat and calorie-dense, chicken also delivers a healthy dose of cartitine, an amino acid that helps the body use fat as energy and helps the muscles remove toxic waste.

Paprika
This spice is high in vitamin C, which acts as a powerful antioxidant and aids muscle recovery. Its vitamin A will also help the body metabolise protein, so you can build more muscle.

Peanut butter
As well as lots of protein, peanut butter also contains healthy fats that will help your body produce testosterone, triggering muscle growth.

You'll find more one-pot wonders at **mensfitness.co.uk/links/topofthepots**

Words **Lucy Miller** Photography **foodanddrinkphotos.com**

Mushroom stew with thyme and feta cheese Serves 4-6

Ingredients

- 45g dried porcini mushrooms
- 50g butter
- 2 onions, thinly sliced
- 3 garlic cloves, finely sliced
- 175g shiitake mushrooms, trimmed and halved
- 300g chestnut mushrooms, trimmed and halved
- 180g oyster mushrooms, torn into chunks
- 4 sprigs of fresh thyme
- 2 bay leaves
- 2tbsp brandy
- 250ml red wine
- 1tbsp tomato purée
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

To serve

- Fresh parsley, chopped
- 150g feta cheese, crumbled

Method

Soak the porcini mushrooms in boiling water for about 20 minutes. Melt the butter in a saucepan, add the onions and cook on a low heat for 20 minutes.

Add the garlic and cook for two minutes, then add the shiitake, chestnut and oyster mushrooms, thyme and bay leaves. Cook gently for ten minutes. Drain the porcini mushrooms, reserving the soaking liquid, rinse and add to the pan. Stir and cook for five minutes.

Strain the porcini-soaking liquid through a sieve lined with kitchen towel. Add the brandy to the pan, wait a couple of minutes for the alcohol to evaporate, then add the wine, strained porcini-soaking liquid, tomato purée, and season with salt and pepper. Cover and cook for 20 minutes until the liquid has reduced. Serve sprinkled with parsley and feta cheese.

Mushrooms
They contain the antioxidant L-ergothioneine, which protects cells from free radical damage. The iron content also helps transport oxygen to your cells, muscles and enzymes to produce energy.

Feta cheese
Cheese offers muscle-building protein and bone-strengthening calcium. Eating feta after a workout also helps replace the sodium lost through sweating, thanks to its salt content.

Tomato purée
This contains vitamin C, which helps lower your levels of cortisol, a muscle-wasting stress hormone that increases with exercise, as well as fat-burning CLA.

Recipes taken from *Stewed! 80 Irresistible Stews & One-Pot Wonders* by Alan Rosenthal

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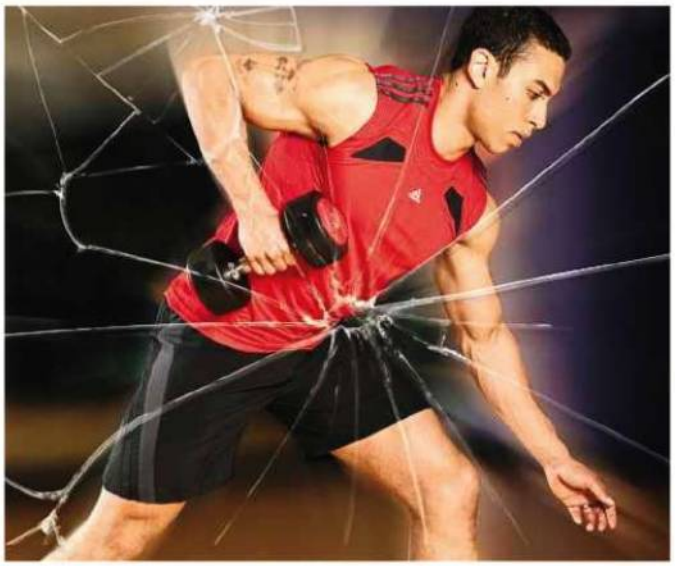

SMASH YOUR LIMITS

Use the 'self destruct' method to see big gains in less time

What you do

Perform an upper-body strength exercise for 30 seconds. Immediately follow it with 30 seconds of a lower-body plyometric exercise, then move straight on to another upper-body power exercise. The next workout reverses the sequence: lower-body strength exercise to upper-body plyometric, then lower-body strength again.

How it works

'This workout uses a different tempo and weight from your normal workout, so you shock your body into growth,' says fitness expert Jason Anderson (movement3.co.uk). 'You're doing exercises back to back that normally require rest, which ups the tempo and saves you gym time. And because you're doing the weights moves for just 30 seconds, you can use a heavier weight than normal. This method also allows the upper body to recover while you are doing the lower-body exercise and vice versa.'

When to do it

'Do it every four weeks to avoid overtraining,' says Anderson. 'By the end you will be shattered.'

Do the circuits five times to start with, plus two minutes' warm-up and warm-down. Rest for 90 seconds between circuits. As time goes on you can increase the number of circuits.

Self destruct The key elements

- **Strength move** Using a heavy weight encourages muscle growth by placing the muscle under more tension.
- **Plyometric move** You move explosively, which trains your nervous system to generate power efficiently. It should also help you jump higher and move quicker during short time intervals.
- **Peripheral heart action (PHA)** Moving between the upper and lower body pumps blood through your muscles rather than just into them. This raises your heart rate and the amount of growth hormones circulating the body.

Monday

Sets 5
Time 30 seconds
Rest 90 seconds between circuits

1 Bench press 30 seconds

- Lie on the bench with your feet firmly on the floor and grip the bar with your hands just wider than shoulder-width apart.
- Lower the bar down until it's just above your chest.
- Pause, then push up, breathing out until your arms are extended.

2 Lunge jump 30 seconds

- Start in a lunge position with your left leg in front.
- Jump up and swap leg positions in mid-air.
- Land in another lunge with the right leg forward and go straight into the next jump.

3 Kettlebell one-arm clean to press 30 seconds each arm

- With feet shoulder-width apart, bend and grab the kettlebell with a straight arm.
- Lift the kettlebell by straightening your body.
- Bend your arm and roll the kettlebell onto the outside of your forearm, keeping your elbow close to your chest.
- Bend slightly at the knees and press the kettlebell up, extending your arm.
- Lower the kettlebell and repeat.

Turn over for Wednesday and Friday's workouts »»»

Wednesday

1 Squat
30 seconds

- Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart with a bar braced against the top of your back.
- Squat down until your thighs are parallel to the floor.
- Pause, then drive back up through your heels to the starting position.

2 Variable press-up jump
30 seconds

- Get into a normal press-up position with your body in a straight line. Bend your elbows to lower your chest to the floor, then explosively push your torso upwards.
- Lift your hands off the floor and return them to the ground in different positions.
- Vary your hand position with every rep.

3 One-legged hop
30 seconds each leg

- Stand up straight and balance on one leg.
- Brace your core and lower into a one-legged squat position and jump as far forward as possible.
- Return and stabilise yourself, then hop to the side. Return, then rotate to the outside.
- Spring back and repeat.

Friday

1 Chin-up
30 seconds

- Hang from the chin-up bar at full extension with your palms facing towards you.
- Pull yourself up until your chin is higher than the bar.
- Slowly lower yourself under control and repeat.

2 Lateral Bosu stepover
30 seconds

- Stand with your right foot on the centre of the Bosu and your left foot on the floor.
- Lower into a squat position, then explode up quickly and shift your feet to the right so your left foot is on the Bosu and your right foot is on the floor.
- Move your feet as quickly as you can.

3 Split high pull
30 seconds each arm

- Stand in a split stance holding a dumb-bell in your right hand with your arm hanging straight down.
- Lunge down and as you push up, bring your arm back towards your body in a rowing fashion.
- Pause for a second before lowering slowly to the start. Repeat on the other side.

For more total-body workouts head to **mensfitness.co.uk/links/allovermuscle**

Words **Lucy Miller** Photography **Tom Miles** Model **Mark Hughes@WAthletic** Thanks to Fitness First Tottenham Court Road, London (fitnessfirst.co.uk) Kit supplied by Adidas (adidas.com/uk)

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Bent-over row

It's a classic move for training your upper back, but the technique can be tricky. Here's how to do it right

'The bent-over row works the opposite muscle group to the bench press – and the main difference is you provide your own platform using your lower body, core and glutes to support your weight,' says personal trainer Neil Odell, founder of Fit For My Day (fit4myday.com).

'The key to the row is to retract your shoulder blades to allow the bar to come up to your chest, but too many men shrug their shoulders and round their back because they haven't got the strength in their traps, rhomboids and rear deltoids to control the movement. This takes the intended muscles out the equation and can cause imbalances. A strong core is also vital, because your upper back is worked the most when your torso is parallel to the floor, so your core will have to work hard to keep you balanced and stabilised.'

How to do it

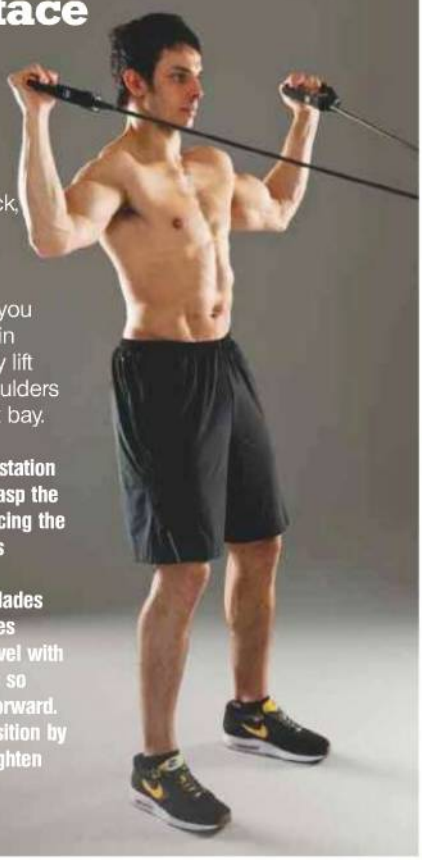
- Start with your core braced, your back straight and your shoulder blades retracted.
- Bend your knees slightly and lean forward from the hips. Grip the bar with your hands just wider than shoulder-width apart and let it hang at knee level.
- Pull the bar up to just below your sternum, squeezing your shoulder blades together at the top of the move, then lower slowly back to the start.

For more back-building moves go to **mensfitness.co.uk/links/backtobasics**

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

These exercises will improve your bent-over row

Standing face pull with rotation



Face pulls improve posture and help build muscle in the upper back, especially your rotator cuff, rear deltoids and trapezius. Training these muscles not only helps you break through plateaus in almost every upper-body lift but also keeps your shoulders balanced and injuries at bay.

How to do it

- Stand in front of a cable station or resistance bands and grasp the handles with your palms facing the floor. Stand back so there is tension in the cables.
- Squeeze your shoulder blades together and pull the handles towards you until they're level with your face. Rotate your arms so your palms end up facing forward.
- Return to the starting position by allowing your arms to straighten out slowly in front of you.

Gym ball T to cobra

This move strengthens the lower back and emphasises scapular retraction (pulling the shoulder blades back) by working the mid-traps and rhomboids. It also works your core, which has to work extra hard as you try to balance on the gym ball, while your posterior deltoids get a workout too.

How to do it

- Lie face down on a gym ball with your lower stomach resting on the ball and arms stretched above your heard.
- Raise your torso using the lower back, squeezing your glutes and keeping your head in line with your body.
- As you rise move your arms down to the sides of your body, squeezing your upper back.

Renegade row

Pulling the weights from the floor discourages poor form because you can't use momentum to lift the weights up. Renegade rows also work your lats, deltoids, core strength and your horizontal pushing and pulling muscle groups.

How to do it

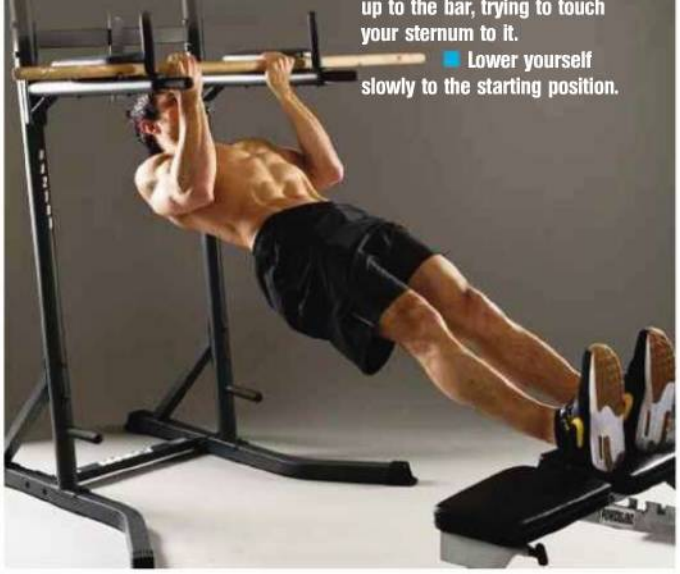
- Place a pair of dumb-bells on the floor shoulder-width apart and assume a press-up position over them with your body in a straight line from head to toe.
- Shift your weight to the left side of your body, and pull the right dumb-bell towards your hip in a rowing fashion. Return it to the floor slowly.
- Repeat on the other side.

Inverted row

This move works all your major pulling muscles, but with even more emphasis on your core and lats. The inverted row will also correct bad posture and build your grip strength without putting any pressure on the lower back.

How to do it

- Set a horizontal bar at about chest height.
- Put your feet on a bench and lie underneath the bar holding it with an underhand grip, hands just wider than shoulder-width apart.
- Keeping your hips in line with your torso, pull your body up to the bar, trying to touch your sternum to it.
- Lower yourself slowly to the starting position.



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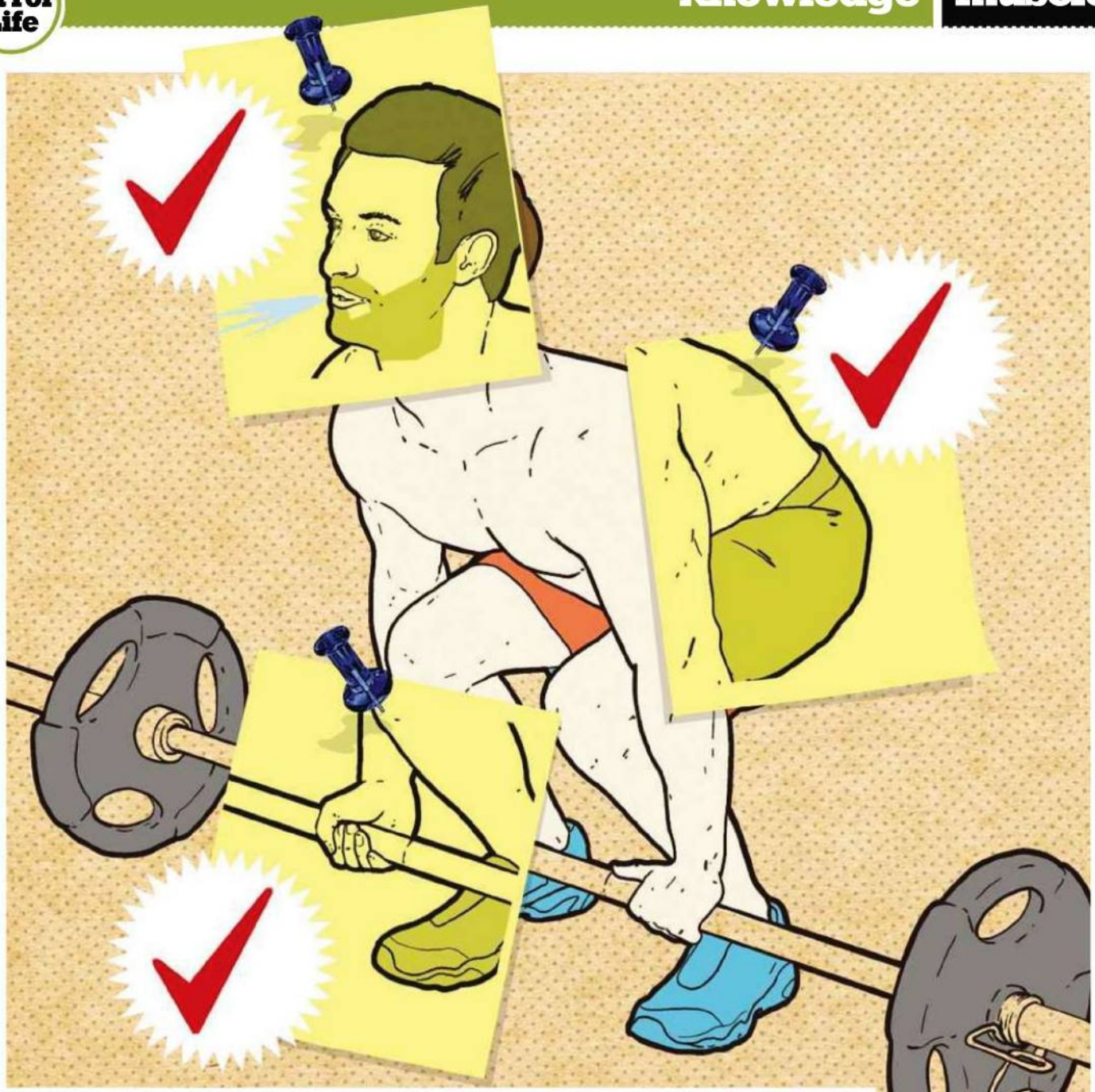

Prepare for lift-off

Every time you hit the gym, run through our pre-lifting checklist to improve your technique and strength, and get bigger and stronger, week after week

1 EAT RIGHT

Up to an hour before exercise, eat a light, healthy meal containing low to moderate glycaemic index carbohydrates (oats, brown rice or wholemeal bread), protein (a few slices of chicken) and a little fat (olive oil) to fuel your workout. Just before you start training you could also top up your energy with a banana or another high-carb, low-fat snack if you feel you need it.

WHY? 'Food equals energy, and not eating enough will cause your body to use up your muscle mass for fuel,' says Ben Jones, a personal trainer, fitness tutor and teaching and curriculum manager at Lifetime (lifetimehf.co.uk). 'And big, heavy meals before training, with lots of protein and fat, drives blood to your gut, not your muscles. Always eat light before and heavy after training.'

2 VISUALISE YOUR LIFT

Close your eyes, take a deep breath, then exhale and focus your mind on an exercise to generate a strong mental image of the setting. The more times you run through the perfect exercise technique in your mind, the more prepared and confident you'll feel when it comes to doing it for real.

Words **Lucy Miller** Illustration **Son Of Alan**

WHY? 'Practice makes permanent and your brain neurons don't know the difference between the real and the imagined, so the more you practice perfect technique in your head, the better you'll get in reality,' says Jones. 'It's also great for building confidence and belief, because in your mind you are fully in control and can make sure everything goes to plan. It's all a lot like *The Matrix*.'

'Some gym-goers tend to grip the bar too tightly. This can isolate your forearm muscles and limit your lifting ability'

3 FOOT PLACEMENT

Your feet should be shoulder-width apart, whether you're working on the upper or lower body, and flat on the floor with your body weight well distributed between the big toe, ball of the foot and heel. **WHY? 'If your stance is wider than shoulder-width you won't successfully engage your core muscles to their full potential,'** says John Williams, a campus training coach at David Lloyd Leisure (davidlloyd.co.uk). 'If your feet are too narrow you'll lose your balance and call upon other muscles that shouldn't be working to help. Your feet should also point directly forwards, but if you suffer from knee pain you may find it more comfortable to turn them out slightly.'

4 CHECK YOUR POSTURE

Before lifting any weight, you must contract your core muscles and make sure your spine is in a neutral position (neither extended nor flexed). You should also consider your pelvic position. Your pelvis should be horizontal, with your abs contracted. **WHY? 'If your posture's right you'll have all of the core muscles and stabilisers engaged and ready to provide a strong, stable base to perform any exercise,'** says Jones. 'This base also helps stabilise your body and the weight you are about to lift, which helps you lift more and avoid injury.'

5 RELAX YOUR SHOULDERS

When pushing or pulling weights, stand tall and keep your shoulders back and relaxed. **WHY? 'If muscles around the shoulder joint are tight, the shoulder joint structure and position can be affected,'** says Jones. 'This may limit your range of movement and could affect overhead movements in particular. It also increases the chances of injuring your shoulder when performing shoulder presses or upright rows, for example. Your shoulder blades should be slightly retracted and flat against your rib cage. This requires using the lower part of the trapezius muscle, an area that is often much neglected in training.'

6 WATCH YOUR GRIP

Before lifting the bar, make sure it is in line with your forearm and that your fingers are wrapped over the bar with thumbs underneath. **WHY? 'If your thumbs are over the top with your fingers, it will cause excessive extension and compression of the wrist, which will lead to pain,'** says Williams. 'Holding the bar like this could also cause an injury because if it's not placed securely in your hands it could slip. Some gym-goers also tend to grip the bar too tightly. This can isolate the muscles in your forearm and limit your lifting ability.'

7 WATCH YOUR BREATH

Remember that you must breathe out on the concentric muscle contraction (lifting the weight) and in on the eccentric muscle contraction (lowering the weight). Your breathing should be deep but take care not to breathe too deeply because this could lead to hyperventilation. And forgetting to breathe properly because you're concentrating on what you're lifting can put a real strain on your body, too. **WHY? 'Holding your breath when lifting can cause high blood pressure and will limit oxygen supply to working muscles,'** says Williams. 'When accelerating [lifting] a weight you also need more support from your core to set a firm base to lift from. The advantage of breathing out on the acceleration is that the core muscles can contract more fully because they don't have to resist lungs, which are full of air.' MF

CUT OUT CHECKLIST

Take this to the gym for a perfect lift

- 1 EAT RIGHT ☐
- 2 VISUALISE YOUR LIFT ☐
- 3 FOOT PLACEMENT ☐
- 4 CHECK YOUR POSTURE ☐
- 5 RELAX YOUR SHOULDERS ☐
- 6 WATCH YOUR GRIP ☐
- 7 WATCH YOUR BREATH ☐

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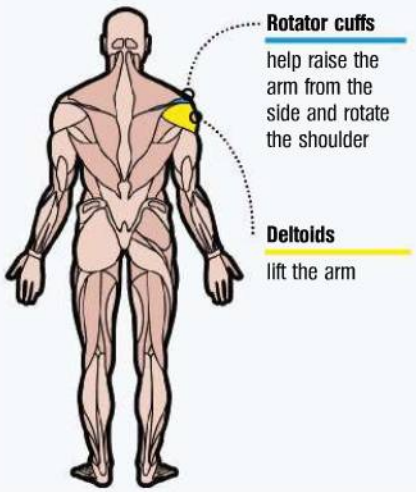
Target **Shoulders**

Weight on your shoulders

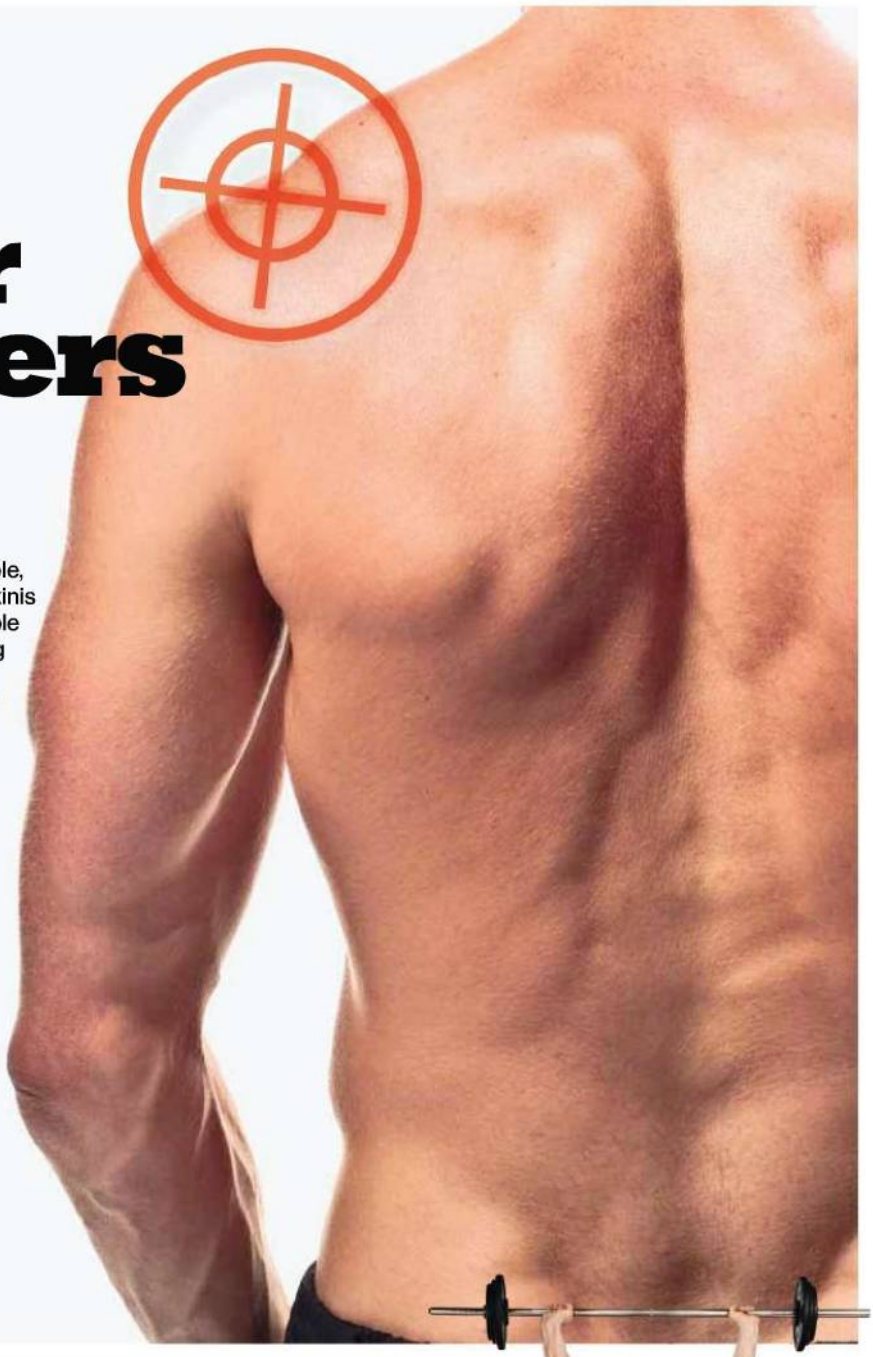
Make the right impression with exercises to give you broad, strong shoulders

When you walk into a room – whether it's the office, the gym or, just to take a random example, a beach-side bar full of attractive women in bikinis – your shoulders can be the first attribute people spot. But getting impressively broad and strong shoulders isn't easy. They're hugely versatile and manoeuvrable joints, which means they're often the first place to get hurt and the last place to get big. The solution is to strengthen the smaller rotator muscles as well the main ones that provide the power.



Rotator cuffs
help raise the arm from the side and rotate the shoulder

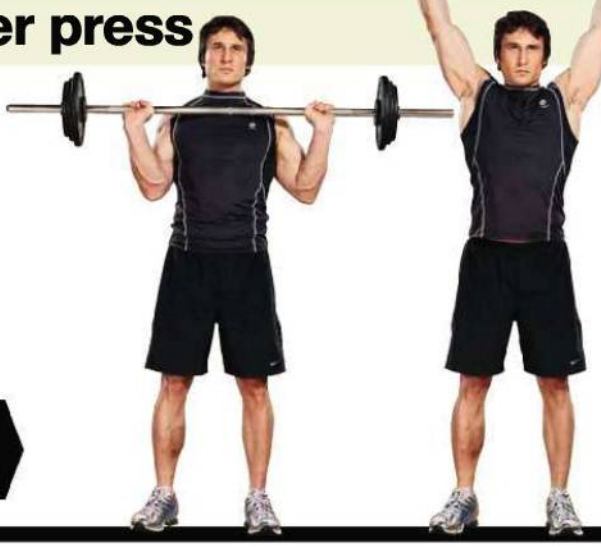
Deltoids
lift the arm



Classic move Shoulder press

The shoulder press is an effective way of targeting your shoulders but also works your triceps and upper back. Do this move more explosively to hit the fast-twitch fibres in your shoulders and always stand up to recruit your core and lower back muscles.

- Stand holding a barbell just above your shoulders with an overhand grip.
- Brace your core and press the weight straight above your head until your arms are fully extended.
- Pause for one second then slowly lower the weight to the starting position.



Sets 3
Reps 10-12

Turn over for six great shoulder-building moves

Words **Lucy Miller** Photography **Tom Miles, Danny Bird** Models **James Greenwood, Alex Nardell@WAthletic**

SIX OF THE BEST

Shoulder exercises

For wide, powerful shoulders, you need to be able to shift big weights – but it's vital to work the small, stabilising muscles as well, which means you also hit your triceps and upper back.

For a quick workout, warm up with a stabilising move to switch on the muscles surrounding the joint and then choose three exercises that allow you to lift lots of weight and hit your shoulders from various angles. For example, do the shoulder press to hit the front of the shoulders, the one-leg scaption to hit the sides and finish with the explosive cable squat to overhead raise to hit the back.

Alternatively you could try the quick-fire shoulder workout at the bottom of the page.

ICON KEY

GO LIGHT
Use a light resistance and focus on getting the form right.

STABILISER
A move that requires you to hold your body steady.

GO HEAVY
To pack on muscle, use the heaviest weight you can handle safely.

EXPLOSIVE
These moves should be done quickly and powerfully.

COMPOUND
A move that uses multiple joints and muscle groups.

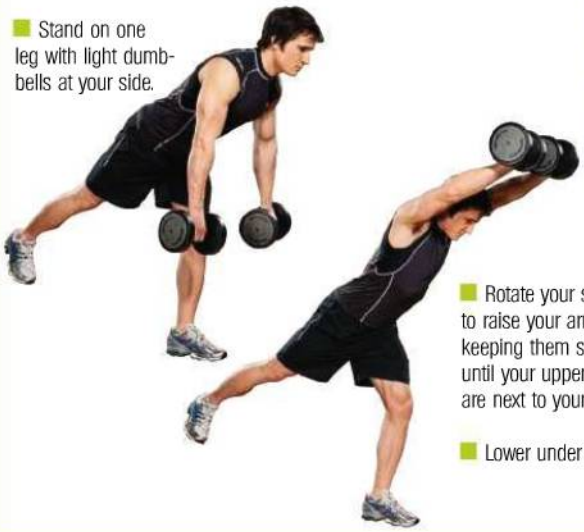
CORE
Exercises that train the muscles around your midriff.

ISOLATION
A single-joint move that targets a specific muscle group.

FORM ALERT
Get the form right to avoid injuries to muscles, tendons or ligaments.

One-leg front raise

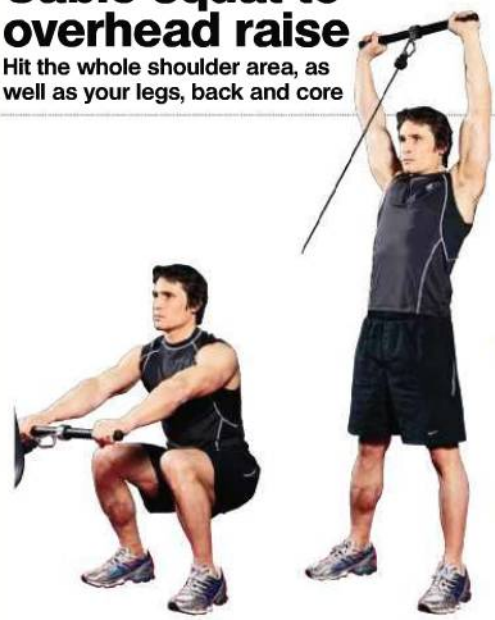
This move hits the supraspinatus, the rotator cuff muscle most likely to tear



- Stand on one leg with light dumbbells at your side.
- Rotate your shoulders to raise your arms, keeping them straight, until your upper arms are next to your head.
- Lower under control.

Cable squat to overhead raise

Hit the whole shoulder area, as well as your legs, back and core



- Using a small, straight bar, squat down gently, keeping your back neutral.
- Stand up and lift the handle overhead with straight arms.

SHOULDER CIRCUIT

This workout includes both shoulder isolation moves and compound exercises that recruit a number of other muscles, giving you a great all-round workout as well as strengthening your shoulders.

How to do it

Circuits 3
Reps 12 (10 each side for one-sided moves)
Rest 90 seconds between circuits

1 One-leg front raise

Rotate your shoulders and raise the weights until your upper arms are next to your head.

We've got lots more shoulder moves at **mensfitness.co.uk/links/bouldershoulders**

Upright row

This move hits the front and sides of the shoulders, as well as your biceps and forearms

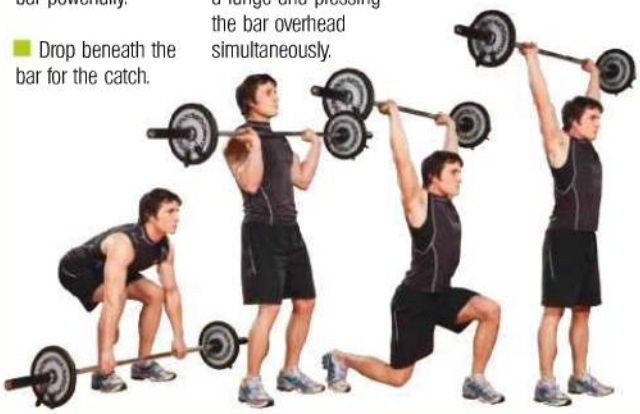
Training tip
When lifting a heavier weight, you may arch your back. Reduce the weight so you put less stress on your back and don't get injured.

- Start with a narrow grip, so your hands are about 20cm apart.
- Breathe out and pull the barbell towards your chin, keeping your elbows above the bar.
- Return the bar to the hang position at your waist.

Barbell clean and jerk

This exercise targets so many muscle groups it's a workout in itself. Start light so you can execute perfect form throughout

- Start in the deadlift position before lifting the bar powerfully.
- Drop beneath the bar for the catch.
- Stand up straight and steady yourself before dropping into a lunge and pressing the bar overhead simultaneously.
- Move your back leg forwards to stand upright.



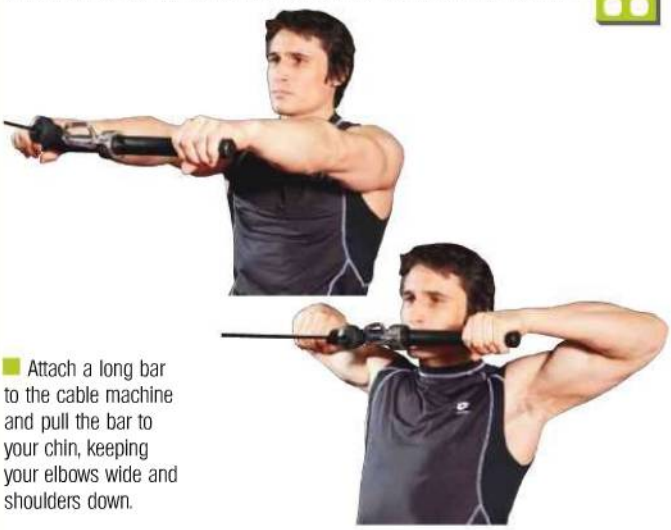
Pike press

A highly effective move, even though it doesn't require any weight other than your body

- Kneel on two benches positioned side by side and place your hands on the end.
- Put your feet on the benches and raise your backside high but with your arms, back and knees straight.
- Lower your head between the benches by bending your arms, then push your body back up by extending your arms.

Cable face pull

A horizontal pull that balances the muscles of the shoulder joint and strengthens the external rotators



- Attach a long bar to the cable machine and pull the bar to your chin, keeping your elbows wide and shoulders down.

2 Pike press

Put your feet on benches and raise your backside. Lower your head by bending your arms.

3 Shoulder press

Hold a bar on your upper chest, then press it directly overhead.

4 Cable face pull

Pull the bar to your chin, keeping your elbows wide and your shoulders down.

5 Cuban press

Raise the weights until your upper arms are horizontal. Rotate your arms, then press straight up.

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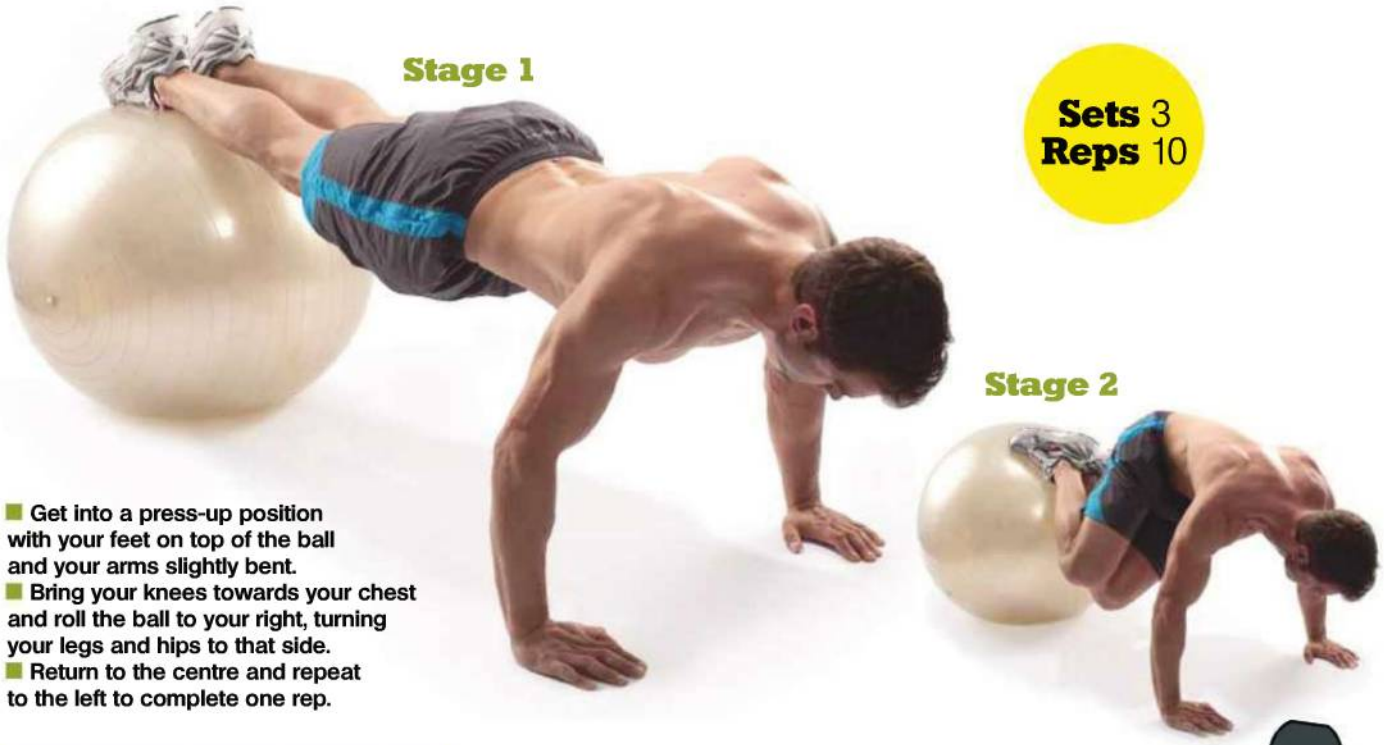
Tomorrow's Nutrition Today

Abs move of the month

Prone jackknife twist

Challenge your core and build strong abs while working your shoulders and lower back



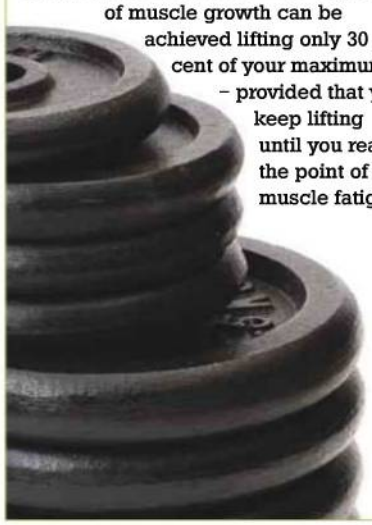
Sets 3
Reps 10

- Get into a press-up position with your feet on top of the ball and your arms slightly bent.
- Bring your knees towards your chest and roll the ball to your right, turning your legs and hips to that side.
- Return to the centre and repeat to the left to complete one rep.

Intelligent training

Lighter weights + fatigue = muscle

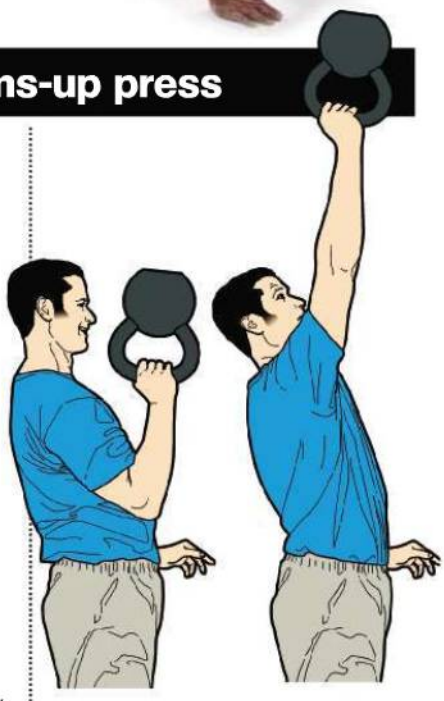
You might think that doing seven to 12 reps using a relatively heavy weight would be the minimum requirement for building muscle. But a new Canadian study has found that a similar degree of muscle growth can be achieved lifting only 30 per cent of your maximum – provided that you keep lifting until you reach the point of muscle fatigue.



Test yourself Bottoms-up press

JAMIE LLOYD

is a personal trainer and the director of Russian Kettlebells UK (russiankettlebellsuk.com). He teaches kettlebell classes and courses in London.



What it tests

'This is an advanced kettlebell lift,' says Lloyd. 'It will put your grip strength to the test as well as challenge your core strength and entire upper body.'

How to do it

'Hold a 16kg kettlebell in one hand so the bottom of the kettlebell is facing the ceiling, with your elbow bent and close to your body. Squeeze the handle tight, engage your core muscles and press the kettlebell overhead, exhaling on the way up. Once the kettlebell is overhead take another deep breath in, and then breathe slowly on the way down as you control the weight back into the start position.'

Can't do it?

'Try to hold the kettlebell in the bottoms-up position for 30 seconds. Do five sets on each hand.

How you rate

Reps	Level
6-10	Excellent
3-5	Good
1-2	Average
0	Poor

If you're after more abs-blasting exercises go to **mensfitness.co.uk/links/coreblimey**

Words **Lucy Miller, Ben Ince** Illustration **Sudden Impact** Photography **Danny Bird** Model **James Farmer@Model Management**

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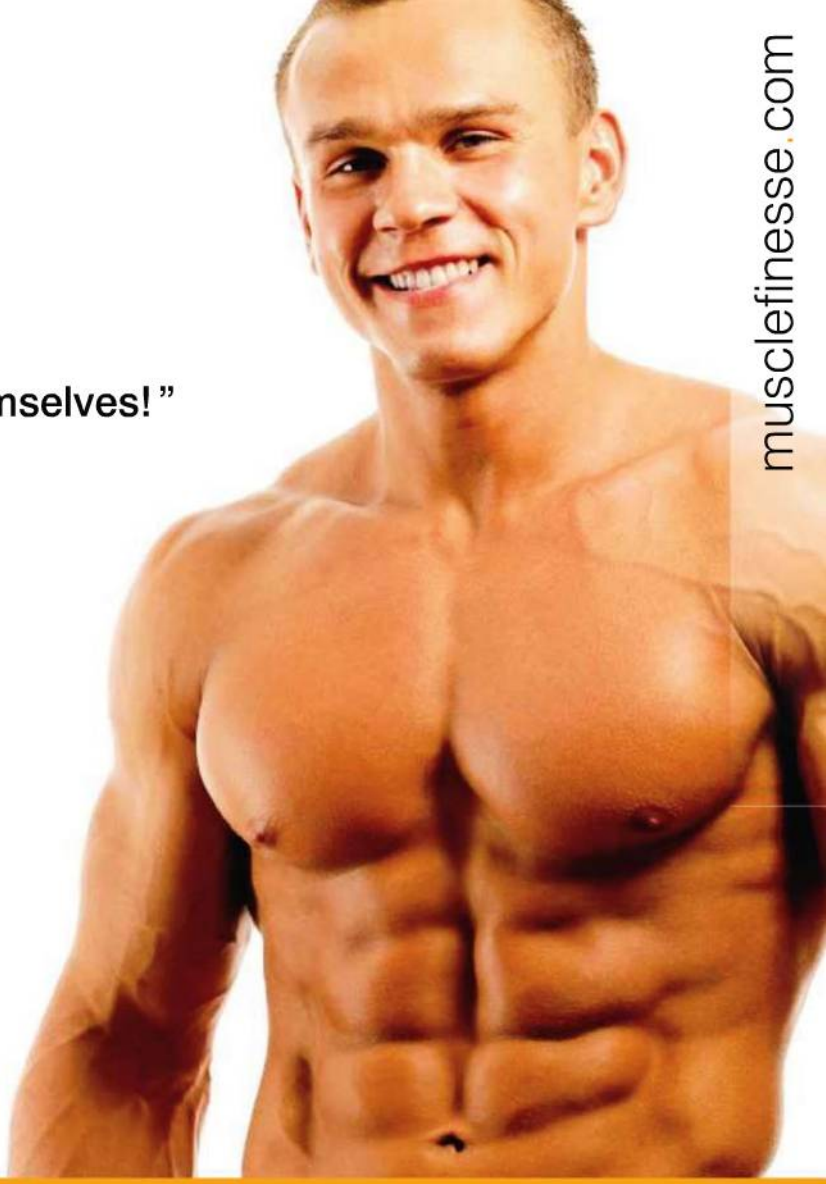

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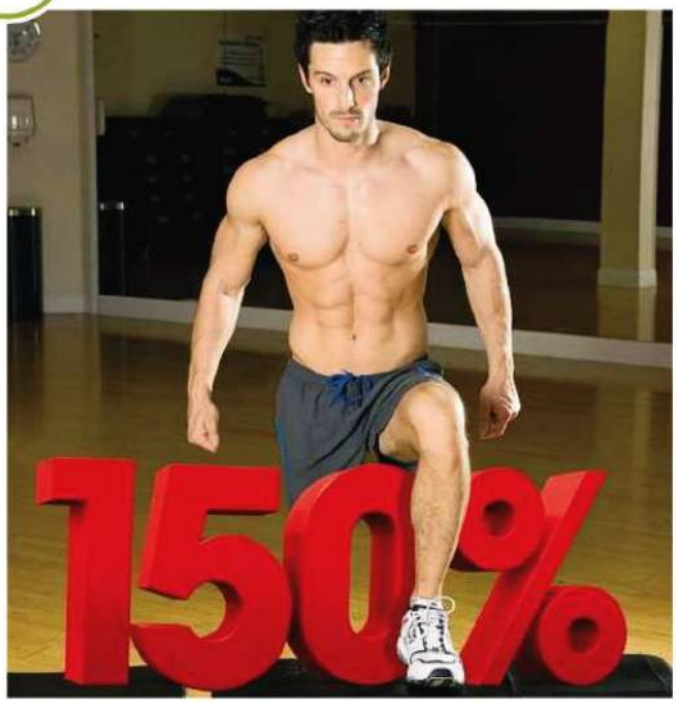


Give it 150%

Add an extra half to your reps to boost strength and progress to a heavier weight

Pro sportsmen often claim they're going to give it 110 per cent or even 120 per cent, but this workout will allow you to go all the way to 150. By doing one full rep and then following it with a half rep, you will increase the load on the muscle in half the time and work on the sticking points that you struggle to overcome.

You'll also work the muscle fibres in isolation and challenge your connective tissue and joints, which have to stop and return within a smaller range.

The moves in this workout are based around compound movements that use more muscle fibres in the body and increase your workout's intensity, so you'll see results quicker.

Days
Do workouts A, B and C once a week each, leaving at least one day's rest between each session.

Timing
50 minutes per session, including the warm-up.

Warm-up
Spend five minutes doing some light cardio followed by bodyweight moves such as dips and pull-ups.

Sets & reps
Do eight lots of 1½ reps when the programme calls for it. Do 15 reps for normal exercises. Perform three sets of each.

Weight
Choose a slightly lighter weight so you don't overload your connective tissues and compromise on form.

Tempo
Take one second to raise the weight, pause for one second at the top and take two seconds to lower it.

Rest
Rest 90 seconds between 1½-rep sets and 60 seconds between normal sets.

After four to five weeks your muscles will need a new challenge, so get the December issue of *Men's Fitness* for a new set of all-body workouts

Workout A Legs and core

1a Jumping lunge
Reps 15

- Jump up and swap leg positions in mid-air.

1b Front squat
Reps 8 x 1½

- For the half rep, only lower into a half squat.

2a Medicine ball reverse crunch
Reps 15

- Hold a medicine ball between your knees and curl your knees towards your chest.

2b Romanian deadlift
Reps 8 x 1½

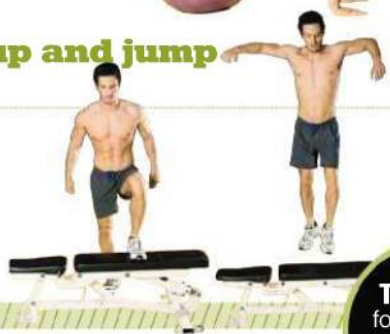
- For the half rep, only drop the bar to your knees.

3a Gym ball jackknife
Reps 15

- Keep your body straight and draw your knees to your chest.

3b Step-up and jump
Reps 15

- Push off your leading leg powerfully to jump.



Turn over for workouts B and C

Workout B Chest and back

1a Gym ball back extension
Reps 15

- Lift so your body forms a straight line. Don't over-extend.

1b Reverse-grip bent-over row
Reps 8 x 1½

- For the half row, only lift the weight halfway to your sternum before lowering to the start.

2a Smith machine bench press
Reps 8 x 1½

- For the half rep, press the weight halfway up and then lower again.

2b Squat to row
Reps 15

- Stand up and draw the cable in to your gut.

3a Cable pullover
Reps 8 x 1½

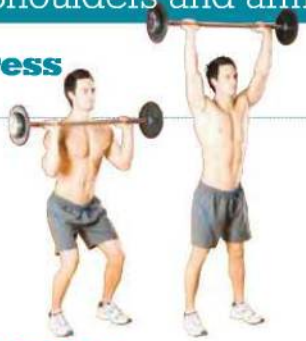
- For the half row, only pull the rope halfway before lowering it slowly behind your head.

3b Pull-up
Reps 8 x 1½

- For the half pull, pull up until the top of your head is level with the bar. Squeeze your lats before lowering back down.

Workout C Shoulders and arms

1a Push press
Reps 8 x 1½

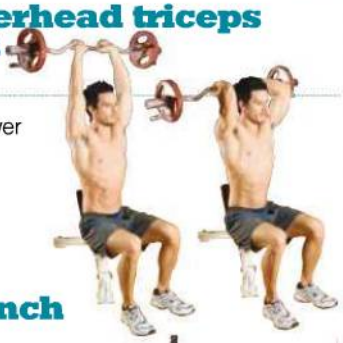


- For the half rep, only raise the bar halfway.

1b Reverse EZ-bar preacher curl
Reps 8 x 1½

- For the half rep, only lower the weights halfway down before curling up.

2a EZ-bar overhead triceps extension
Reps 8 x 1½



- For the half rep, only lower the weight halfway down.

2b Cable crunch
Reps 15

- Keep your arms relaxed and power the move with your abs.

3a Hammer-grip chin-up
Reps 15

- Keep your palms facing each other.

3b Lateral raise
Reps 8 x 1½

- In the half reps, stop when your arms are at 45° to your body.

Words **Lucy Miller** Photography **Tom Miles** Model **Toby Rowland@WAthletic**

You'll find more total-body workouts at **mensfitness.co.uk/links/rippedallover**

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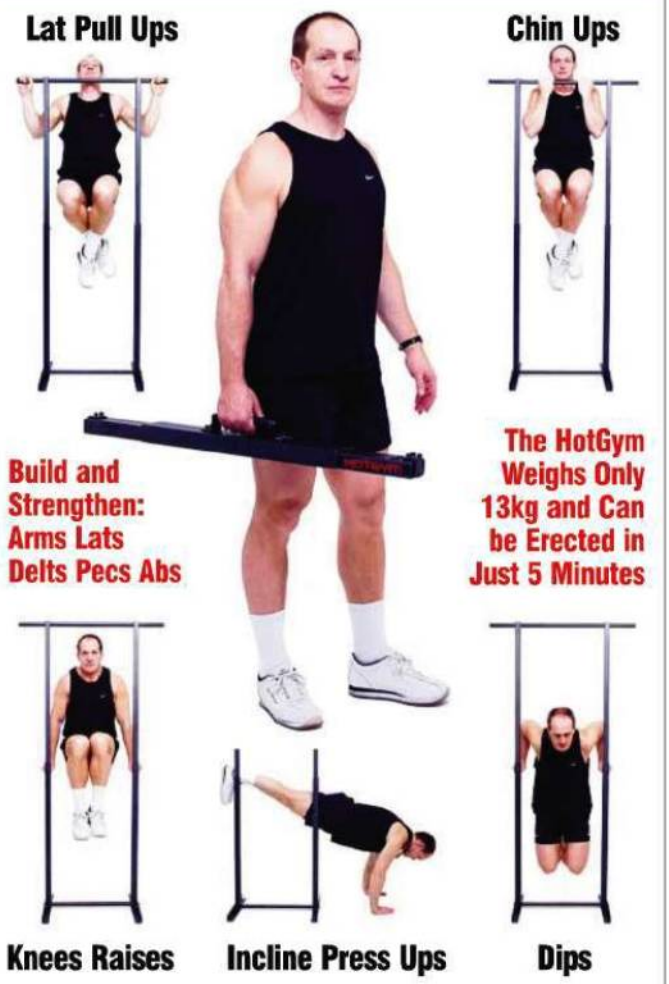

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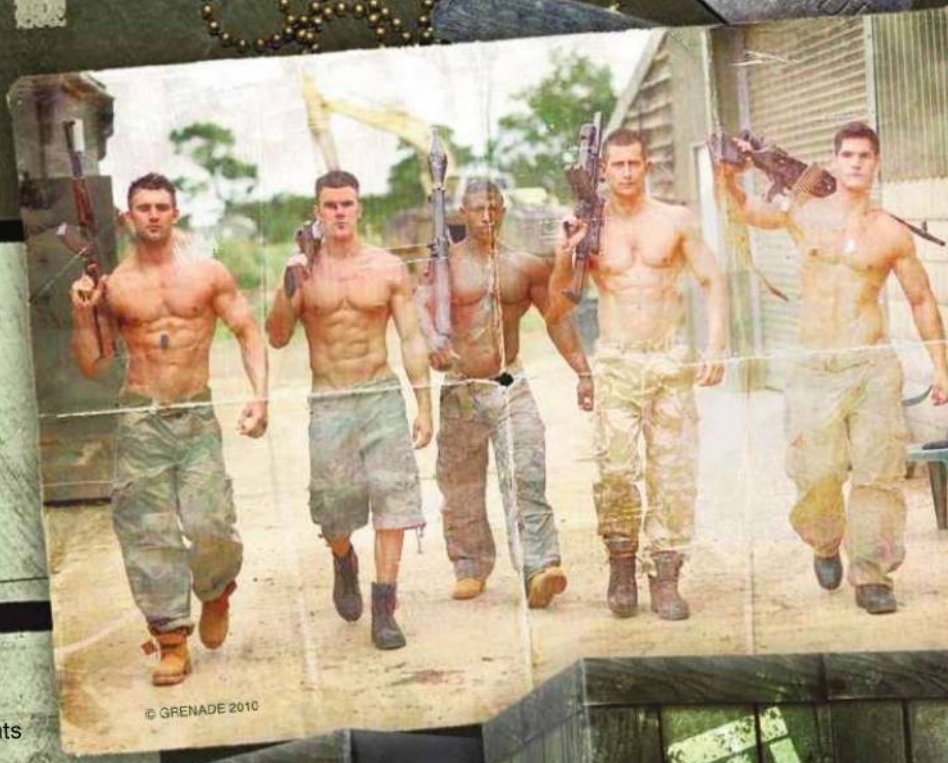

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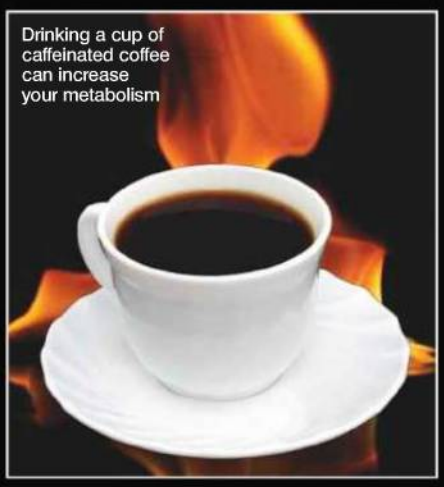
BURN FAT ALL DAY

Boost your metabolism to keep burning calories

Metabolism is the way your body converts food into energy, and your metabolic rate is the speed at which it does this. So the higher your metabolism, the more efficiently you burn calories. Follow these metabolism-boosting tips if you want to shed fat.


Drinking a cup of caffeinated coffee can increase your metabolism

When you get up

Eat a decent breakfast that contains lean protein, complex carbs and healthy fats. Eating first thing immediately raises your metabolism by 70 per cent. According to a study published in the *American Journal Of Epidemiology*, people who got 22 to 55 per cent of their total daily calories at breakfast were half as likely to gain weight as those who got 11 per cent or less.

For an extra BOOST

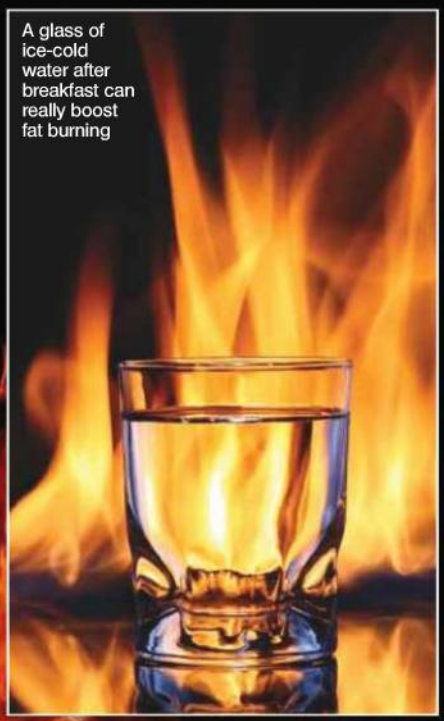
Wash your breakfast down with an ice-cold glass of water. Research from the University of Utah found that people who drank cold water increased their metabolic rate for up to 30 minutes. It will also give you more energy, because dehydration thickens the blood, which decreases the heart's efficiency and causes fatigue.

On your commute

Stopping you falling asleep ten pages into your Stieg Larsson isn't caffeine's only effect – a study published in the journal *Physiology & Behaviour* found that the average metabolic rate of people who drank regular coffee was 16 per cent higher than those who drank decaf. This is because it stimulates the nervous system, which in turn increases your heart rate.

For an extra BOOST

You don't have to wait for a pregnant woman or elderly lady to get on the train to give up your seat and stand up. Standing encourages the enzyme lipase, which is critical to the body's ability to break down fat, to keep working. Plus you buy yourself some easy karma points.


A glass of ice-cold water after breakfast can really boost fat burning

At work

Rather than go all morning without eating and shovelling a huge lunch of roast chicken and potatoes down your neck at 1pm, eat little and often throughout the day, says research from Georgia State University. Your body is genetically programmed to conserve energy when food intake is sparse, so if you don't eat often enough, you'll lower your metabolism. Also, every time you eat something your body uses energy to break down the food, which keeps your metabolism firing on all cylinders – referred to as the thermogenic effect of food. Unfortunately, grazing on Maltesers doesn't count. Try fruit and nuts instead.

For an extra BOOST

Eat a source of protein with every meal. Protein contains nitrogen, which must be stripped and eliminated by the liver. As a result, it takes longer to digest and can increase your metabolism by 40 per cent.

In the gym

Switching to interval sessions from slow, steady training enables you to burn more calories in the same amount of time. Research from the University of New South Wales in Australia found that cyclists who alternated eight seconds of sprinting and 12 seconds of easy pedalling lost three times as much as body fat over 15 weeks than those who exercised at a steady pace. Short bursts of speed stimulate chemical compounds called catecholamines, which allow more fat to be burned from under the skin and within the exercising muscles.

For an extra BOOST

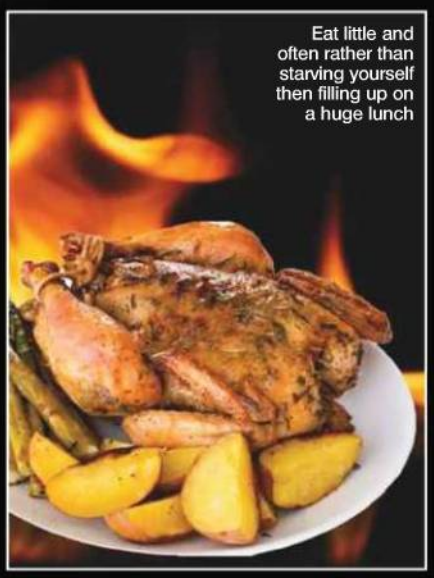
Taking three seconds to lower a weight back to the start position pumps up your metabolism for as long as 72 hours after your session. A US study found that slowing things down increases the breakdown of muscle tissue, so you burn more calories during the repair process.

When you get home

Oily fish such as salmon, tuna and mackerel are not only loaded with appetite-suppressing omega 3 fatty acids, but they will also lower your body's levels of leptin, the hormone responsible for clearing fat out of cells and regulating your metabolism. Research from the University of Wisconsin suggests that a low leptin level creates a faster metabolism.

For an extra BOOST

Load the dishwasher, pour a glass of something healthy and end the day watching comedy. US research found that when individuals were shown humorous clips, they burned as many as 40 more calories. Fans of *Friends* are most likely to burn calories, since it's on at least 24 hours every day. Or Spurs' efforts in Europe might do the trick.


Eat little and often rather than starving yourself then filling up on a huge lunch

We've got a metabolism-boosting workout at **mensfitness.co.uk/links/burnfaster**

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Ring toning

Unleash your inner fighter with this fat-burning boxing circuit

If you're looking to raise your heart rate and burn some fat, you could go for a long run or do some intervals – or you could spend a bit of time beating the crap out of something. Which is most appealing?

Boxing has many advantages: it gets you fit, helps you unleash aggression, gives you attractive bruises that impress a certain kind of lady – and gets your heart hammering, helping you burn loads of body fat. *MF* has enrolled professional boxing trainer Ian Burbedge (padbox.co.uk) to design this month's fat-frying circuit. It will work your body to the max, while giving you an anaerobic workout.

'The key when using a bag is to keep the intensity high,' says Burbedge, a former semi-pro boxer. 'Put lots of effort into your punches and move around the bag. You will see some amazing physical changes to your body in no time.'

Do the following exercises in order, taking no rest between stations. Once you have completed one circuit, rest for two minutes before repeating it.

Time per circuit
28 minutes

Calorie burn
600

What you need

Reebok Khan Replica 14oz sparring gloves £29.95

If you're using a punchbag, these 14oz (400g) gloves will help protect your hands from cuts and bruises. You'll look like you know what you're about if you turn up to the gym with your own gloves – and it's better than having to wear sweaty communal ones.

argos.co.uk

START

Warm up with five minutes of skipping, changing your footwork patterns every minute. Hit the bag lightly to loosen up your shoulders and to get the blood pumping to your muscles.

Exercise 1

Shadow boxing

Time 3 minutes

Get into a boxing stance, with your shoulders relaxed and your legs shoulder-width apart with the dominant leg back. Throw different combinations of punches into the air, starting with one-two combinations and then adding a left hook and uppercut.

It's working when your mind is focused and you are throwing strong, powerful punches.

Exercise 2

Dumb-bell lunge with punches

Time 3 minutes

Stand holding a pair of dumb-bells. Step forward with your right leg and lower your body until your front knee is bent at 90°, then bring your foot back to the starting position. Perform three reps on each leg, then punch out in front of you with the dumb-bells ten times with each hand. Repeat for three minutes.

It's working when your pecs are challenged and your core is tight throughout the whole move.

FINISH

Walk around the gym to get your heart rate back down. Follow this with some gentle stretching, holding each stretch for 30 seconds.

'If you haven't got access to a punchbag, don't worry,' says Burbedge. 'Ask a mate to hold some pads or shadow box instead. Just keep good form and keep the intensity and speed high.'

Exercise 7

Side plank with rotation and crunch

Time 2 minutes

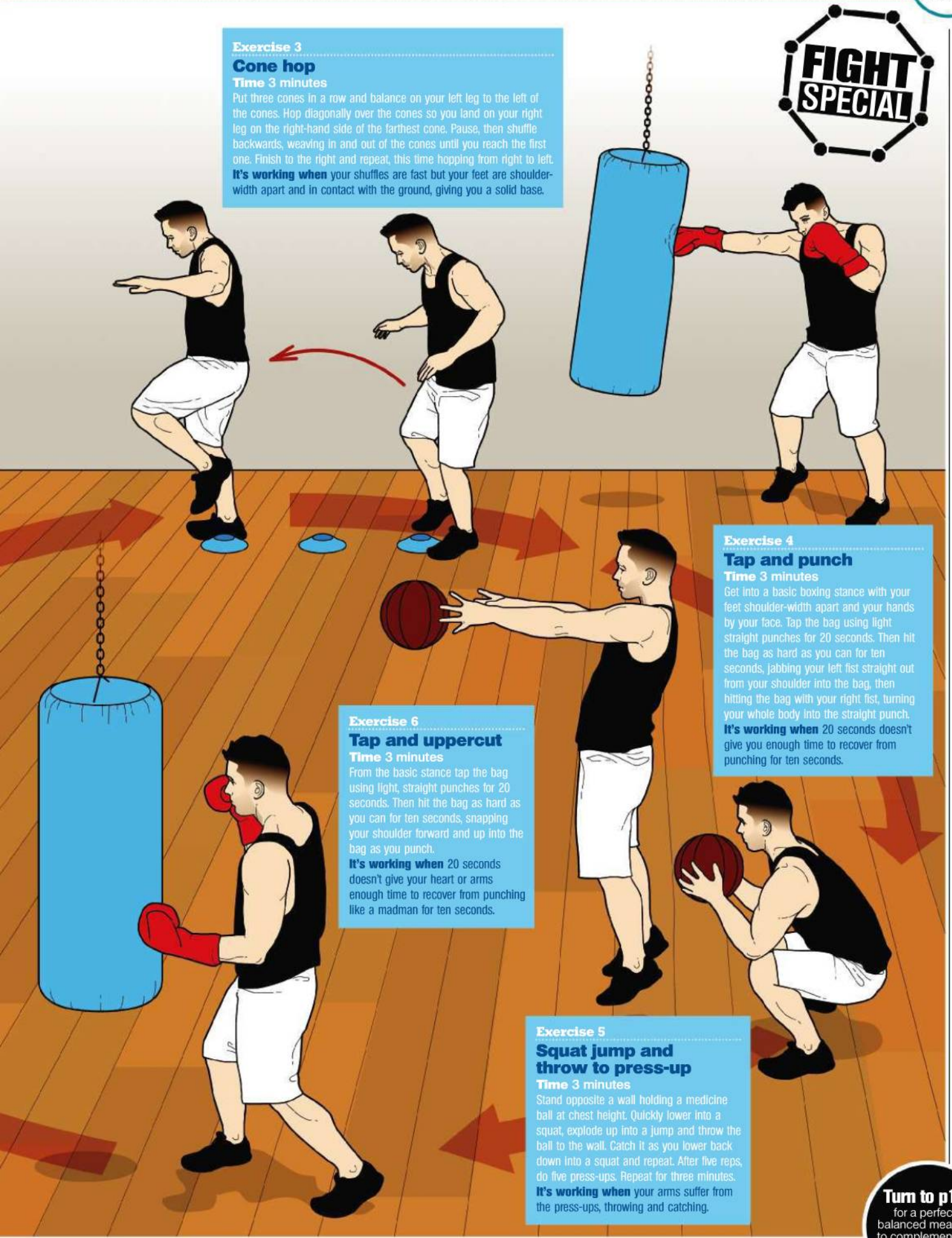
Get in a plank position on your right side. Brace your abs and reach up with your left hand. Slowly tuck your left arm under your body and twist forward until your torso is almost parallel to the floor. Return to the starting position. Repeat this for 40 seconds, then do 40 seconds of crunches. Then repeat the plank on your left side.

It's working when your hips are high during the plank and your abs are burning throughout.

Words **Lucy Miller** Illustrations **Sudden Impact** The amount of calories burned will vary depending on your bodyweight and fitness level

For more fat loss circuits, visit **mensfitness.co.uk/links/killthefat**

FIGHT SPECIAL



Exercise 3

Cone hop

Time 3 minutes

Put three cones in a row and balance on your left leg to the left of the cones. Hop diagonally over the cones so you land on your right leg on the right-hand side of the farthest cone. Pause, then shuffle backwards, weaving in and out of the cones until you reach the first one. Finish to the right and repeat, this time hopping from right to left. **It's working when** your shuffles are fast but your feet are shoulder-width apart and in contact with the ground, giving you a solid base.

Exercise 4

Tap and punch

Time 3 minutes

Get into a basic boxing stance with your feet shoulder-width apart and your hands by your face. Tap the bag using light straight punches for 20 seconds. Then hit the bag as hard as you can for ten seconds, jabbing your left fist straight out from your shoulder into the bag, then hitting the bag with your right fist, turning your whole body into the straight punch. **It's working when** 20 seconds doesn't give you enough time to recover from punching for ten seconds.

Exercise 6

Tap and uppercut

Time 3 minutes

From the basic stance tap the bag using light, straight punches for 20 seconds. Then hit the bag as hard as you can for ten seconds, snapping your shoulder forward and up into the bag as you punch. **It's working when** 20 seconds doesn't give your heart or arms enough time to recover from punching like a madman for ten seconds.

Exercise 5

Squat jump and throw to press-up

Time 3 minutes

Stand opposite a wall holding a medicine ball at chest height. Quickly lower into a squat, explode up into a jump and throw the ball to the wall. Catch it as you lower back down into a squat and repeat. After five reps, do five press-ups. Repeat for three minutes. **It's working when** your arms suffer from the press-ups, throwing and catching.

Turn to p132 for a perfectly balanced meal plan to complement your fat-burning workout

Secret dairy

Dairy foods have been revealed as fat loss champions. Follow this meal plan and you'll see your waist shrinking in four weeks

CALCIUM RDA
Your recommended calcium intake is 1,000-1,200mg a day

When thinking of foods that help fat loss, milk and yoghurt might not be the first things that leap to mind. But according to recent research, eating dairy and other calcium-rich foods can help you stay lean by blocking the absorption of fat in the gut. That's why *MF* asked nutritionist Lucy-Ann Prideaux (simply-nutrition.co.uk) to come up with this seven-day meal plan. As well as dairy it includes plenty of tasty foods rich in calcium such as salmon, figs, watercress and sesame seeds. Calcium can also aid the muscle contraction you need to lift weights.

35 healthy, tasty meals with plenty of calcium to see off fat

Monday

Breakfast
Mix 300g plain live yoghurt with 50g rolled oats, 1tbsp raisins, 1 chopped orange and 1tbsp sunflower seeds.
Snack
1 apple and 4 dried figs.
Lunch
Sardine and butterbean salad: mix 2 handfuls of mixed salad leaves, 2 chopped tomatoes, 1 chopped spring onion, 120g canned sardines and 1 small can of butter beans. Drizzle with cider vinegar.
Snack
2 plums and 22 almonds.
Dinner
Spanish tortilla with rocket and watercress salad.

Daily total
1,776 calories, 176g carbs, 103g protein, 78g fat

Tuesday

Breakfast
Mix 50g rolled oats, 1tbsp raisins, 1tbsp sunflower seeds and 2 chopped dried figs. Soak in 150g skimmed milk before eating.
Snack
1 large banana and 150g low-fat fruit yoghurt.
Lunch
Chickpea, avocado and parsley salad: chop 1 little gem lettuce into a bowl and add 2 sliced tomatoes, ½ a large can of chickpeas (drained) and ½ an avocado (sliced). Drizzle with vinegar and add 2tbsp chopped parsley. 1 apple.
Snack
1 apple and a handful of pumpkin seeds.
Dinner
Salmon with lentils.

Daily total
1,832 calories, 204g carbs, 105g protein, 71g fat

Wednesday

Breakfast
Baked beans and tuna on 2 slices of seed-topped wholegrain toast.
Snack
22 almonds.
Lunch
Canned salmon, boiled egg, watercress, spinach and rocket salad. 1 apple.
Snack
1 orange and 150g plain yoghurt.
Dinner
Tofu and sesame stir-fry.

Daily total
1,857 calories, 172g carbs, 145g protein, 71g fat

Canned salmon
has 20 times more calcium than other canned fish at 300mg per 100g. It's also high in leptin, which aids fat-burning.

Thursday

Breakfast
Chop the flesh of ¼ of a cantaloupe melon, 1 small mango and 80g purple grapes. Top with 150g low-fat natural yoghurt and 1tsp sunflower seeds.
Snack
4 thin oatcakes with tahini and cucumber.
Lunch
Mash ½ an avocado with 100g low-fat ricotta cheese and 80g canned tuna (drained). Eat with cherry tomatoes, cucumber batons, carrot batons, red pepper strips, raw mushrooms and trimmed green beans.
Snack
1 apple. 4 dried figs.
Dinner
Asian-style chicken and vegetable stir-fry with quinoa.

Daily total
1,872 calories, 188g carbs, 132g protein, 71g fat

Friday

Breakfast
Blueberry, banana and buttermilk smoothie (see below).
Snack
4 thick rice cakes spread with peanut butter and sliced tomato.
Lunch
½ a carton of Covent Garden Lentil and Smoked Bacon soup. 100g hummus with sliced carrot, cucumber, trimmed green beans and cherry tomatoes.
Snack
1 apple and a handful of raisins.
Dinner
Grilled salmon with 200g spinach and 300g boiled new potatoes.

Daily total
1,827 calories, 224g carbs, 95g protein, 68g fat

Saturday

Breakfast
Sardines on 2 slices of seed-topped wholegrain toast.
Snack
1 large pear and 150g low-fat fruit yoghurt.
Lunch
Bake 1 medium-sized sweet potato. Mix ½ a large can of chickpeas, 2tbsp natural yoghurt, 2 chopped tomatoes and a dash of Worcestershire sauce. Top the potato with the mixture and serve with 1 chopped little gem lettuce.
Snack
10 walnuts.
Dinner
Quinoa kedgeree.

Daily total
1,803 calories, 240g carbs, 95g protein, 59 fat

Sunday

Breakfast
Egg and tofu scramble with spinach.
Snack
1 apple with 1tbsp peanut butter.
Lunch
½ a carton of Covent Garden Lentil and Smoked Bacon soup. Salmon salad: 200g can of salmon with bones (drained), 2 large handfuls of mixed lettuce leaves, 2 sliced tomatoes, cucumber and spring onion.
Snack
150g natural yoghurt.
Dinner
Pan-fried lamb's liver with onion mash and mixed vegetables.

Daily total
1,910 calories, 117g carbs, 158g protein, 95g fat

Calcium-rich banana and berry fat loss smoothie

Ingredients
1 banana | 150g blueberries | 250ml low-fat buttermilk
To make Simply blend on the high setting until smooth and creamy.

Buttermilk
is high in calcium, with 285mg in 250ml. It also contains probiotics, which give your digestive system a boost, as well as aiding weight loss and improving immunity.

Blueberries
are a rich source of antioxidants that help fight cell-damaging free radicals. The high fibre content and vitamin C levels also aid with digestion and lowering cholesterol.

Bananas
are low in calories and fat but high in potassium, which helps to reduce your body's water weight and blood pressure.

For the recipes in this plan go to **mensfitness.co.uk/links/fatlossrecipes**

Words **Lucy Miller** Photography **foodanddrinkphotos.com, Shutterstock** Nutritional analysis verified by windiets.co.uk

SEE THE DIFFERENCE

"As a fitness model I'm required to be in top shape all year round, Promax Diet helps make sure I'm always ready for my next shoot"

MARK BRERETON

Men's Fitness Cover Model

MARK BRERETON WON'T COMPROMISE ON THE SPORTS NUTRITION HE USES IN TRAINING, NEITHER SHOULD YOU.

Maximuscle, the UK's number 1 sports nutrition brand is launching several new and innovative high-protein weight-loss products in September and October under the Lean Definition range. Maximuscle's Lean Definition products have been formulated to support your fat-loss and physique goals when combined with a sensible nutrition and balanced exercise plan.

PROMAX DIET
An advanced, high-protein shake with proven weight-loss nutrients.
• 37g protein enriched with Biomax whey to support lean muscle growth
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• Rich supply of BCAAs for muscle growth and repair

PROMAX DIET BAR	AVAILABLE NOW!
High-protein weight loss bars now available in a delicious chocolate mint flavour.	
• 20g protein to support lean muscle growth	
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IN A RECENT SURVEY, **82%** OF PROMAX DIET USERS FELT THEY HAD LOST BODY FAT AFTER JUST 3 WEEKS*†

*Online survey conducted by Zoomerang on 145 men who exercise regularly and use Promax Diet daily (2009)
†When combined with regular training and a calorie controlled diet.

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SEE THE DIFFERENCE

I got ship shape

With no convenient fitness facilities in his unusual workplace, John Spence was forced to improvise – with a little help from *MF*

John Spence
Age 37
Weight
Before 87kg (13st 9lb)
After 73kg (11st 7lb)
Waist
Before 92cm (36in)
After 76cm (30in)
Life
Before Beer and late nights
After Wholegrains, veg and the *MF* Body Challenge

I have always read *Men's Fitness* magazine but, to be honest, just buying it made me feel good. The exercises looked fun, the food advice was interesting and the models looked good – but the healthy lifestyle it portrayed was something I only did occasionally.

I work as a medical officer on boats involved in oil and gas production and although I've always enjoyed working out, it's difficult on the boat. First of all the gym facilities are fairly crap, and second I find juggling exercise with being the only medic on board exhausting and time-consuming. So I mostly didn't bother – until last year when I finally got fed up with seeing other people's healthy, fit bodies.

I decided to follow the 12-week programme in the *Men's Fitness Body Challenge* book to see if I could look like that too. Although at first I was doubtful. The models looked so strong and healthy – surely they were airbrushed or just lived at the gym?

'There were days when I didn't feel like hitting the gym but I always did something'

Hail to the chef

I started my programme determined to stick with it, but I had to make a few adjustments because of my circumstances. I had to bargain with the chef to prepare my meals according to the plan. I also had to improvise with my training – instead of doing cable exercises I hit the same body part with dumb-bells and a bench instead.

I was disappointed when I didn't see quick results. However, after five weeks, my mood and thought process had changed. I had already lost a stone [6.3kg] and my strength and endurance increased. I had more energy and armed with my iPod and my *Body Challenge* magbook, I looked forward to my workouts.

My colleagues were also starting to notice my improved appearance, especially in week six when I took my top off in front of people for the first time. They were amazed by my abs and very low body fat and the compliments flooded in.

MF motivation

To keep me on track I used the evenings to read up on the next day's workout and throughout the day I kept motivated by reading the magazine which got me in the right frame of mind for my workout. There were days when I felt tired or didn't feel like hitting the gym but I told myself ten minutes was better than nothing and by the time I had done that I was energised and would complete the full workout. At other times work got in the way but I made sure I always did something, even if it was at 1am.

After completing the 12-week plan I'm now the proud owner of a six-pack and a stronger and well-defined body. News of my success has spread around the vessel and a few of the crew are doing the challenge too. I am always on hand to give them advice – I want everyone to feel as good as I do.

No more excuses John Spence navigated his way around numerous obstacles to get fit. What's your excuse?

'I haven't got enough time'
'Do the good stuff. Interval training really melts body fat and total-body moves hit every muscle in your body. It only takes 40 minutes to have a good workout so turn off the TV.'

'I'm tired'
'Give it a go. If you're still tired after ten minutes of exercise and listening to fast music, at least you've tried. Normally your endorphins will kick in and you'll stick with it. If not, ten minutes is better than nothing.'

'I could never look like a cover model'
'Believe in yourself. No-one is better than you – we all have the ability to look good. You just need to take charge. Be realistic and set frequent goals to keep you focused along the way.'

Get your copy of *Men's Fitness Body Challenge* for £9.99 at magbooks.com

Words **Lucy Miller** Photography **Danny Bird** Clothing supplied by New Balance (newbalance.co.uk) Trainers supplied by K-Swiss (kswiss.co.uk)

SEE THE DIFFERENCE

"Promax is perfect for supporting muscle growth and fuelling my recovery after tough training sessions, and it tastes great!"

TROY JAMES

Professional boxer

TROY JAMES WON'T COMPROMISE ON THE SPORTS NUTRITION HE USES IN TRAINING. NEITHER SHOULD YOU.

Maximuscle, the UK's number 1 sports nutrition brand is launching several new and innovative high-protein products in September and October under the Promax range. Promax is the UK's number 1 whey protein shake to support lean muscle growth, strength and recovery.

PROMAX READY TO DRINK (RTD)	AVAILABLE OCTOBER 2010
Promax has been developed into a convenient and hydrating performance drink.	
• 23g whey protein isolate and high in BCAAs to support muscle growth and recovery	
• Fat free, carb free & only 92 calories	
• Two great tasting flavours: Orange and Lemon & Lime flavour	

PROMAX MEAL BAR	AVAILABLE NOW!
High-performance protein bar now available in a delicious dark cherry chocolate flavour.	
• 21g protein for lean muscle growth and recovery	
• Low GI and less than 3g saturated fat per bar	
• Perfect for use before and after exercise	

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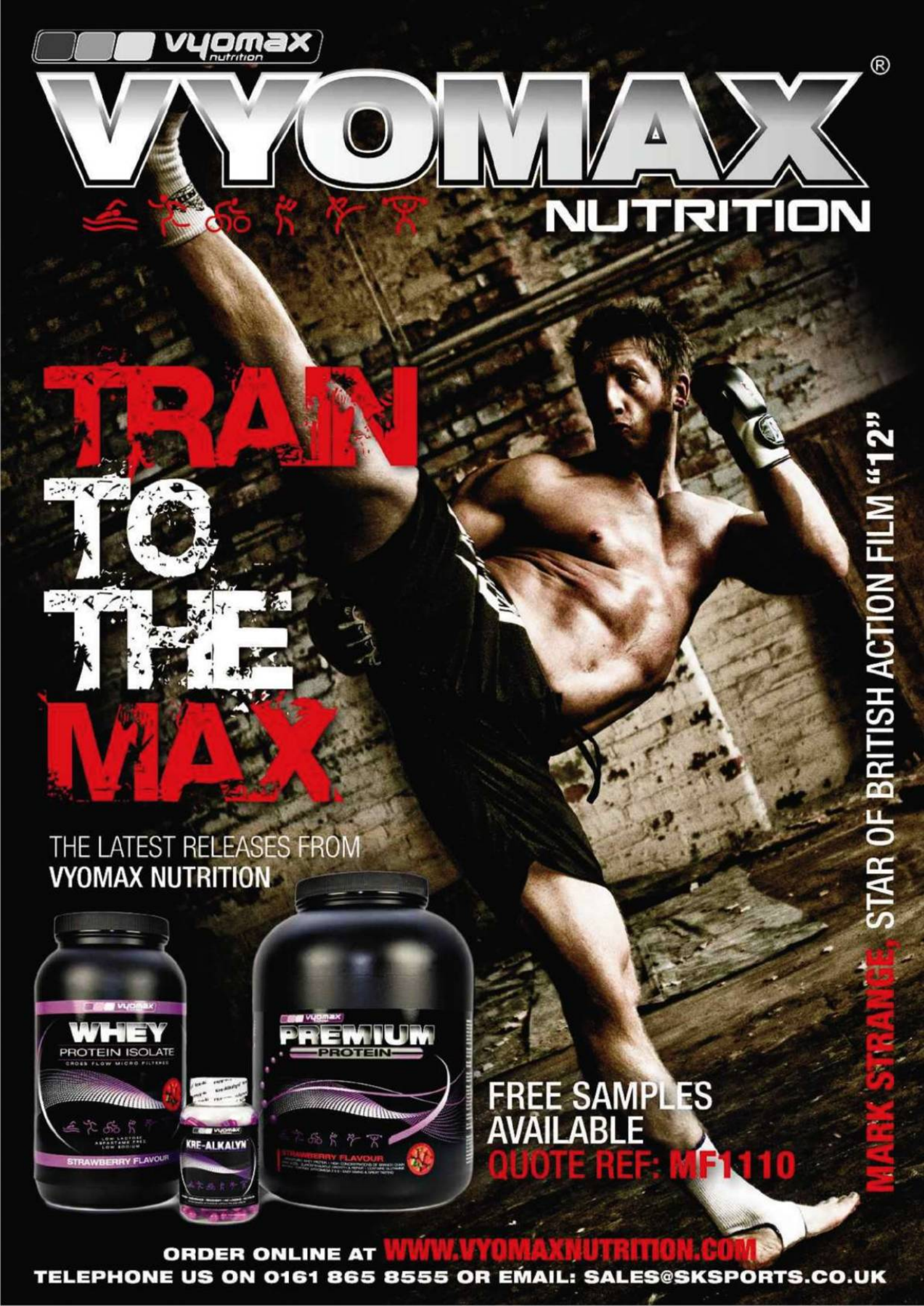
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Puma HellRunner

Get ready for a sadistically tough race – hills, sand and the freezing Bog of Doom

November

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY SATURDAY

What Puma HellRunner
Where Longmoor Camp, Hampshire
When 27th November 2010
Fitness level Intermediate
Details hellrunner.co.uk
Disciplines Cross-country running

Ever wanted to run through hell?

Then this is the race for you. The HellRunner is a course of at least ten miles (16km) – it changes from race to race – full of leg-sapping hills and spirit-breaking bogs with cuddly names like 'Hills of Hell' and 'Bog of Doom.' It's on an army training ground with killer sand dunes and mud. They say you should expect to experience serious pain and serious fun. Are you up for it?

BUY THIS

Helly Hansen Trail Lizard £70
This waterproof trainer is perfect for off-road winter running, thanks to the Helly Grip outsoles, which provide traction in everything from bone dry to soaking wet conditions. The EVA foam will also protect your feet from trail debris, while making the trainer lighter, meaning you can save your energy for wading through mud and struggling up hills.
hellyhansen.com

EVENT DAY

Six-Week HellRunner training plan

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 1	Run at level 3 for 5km.	Rest	Run at level 3 for 5km.	Rest	Run at level 3 for 5km.	Rest	Run at level 6 for 6.5km. Choose an off-road, undulating route.
Week 2	Run at level 4 for 5km.	Rest	Run for 5km. Run the first 1.5km and the last 1.5km at level 4 and the middle 2km at level 6.	Rest	Run at level 4 for 5km.	Rest	Run at level 6 for 6.5km. Choose an off-road, undulating route.
Week 3	Run at level 4 for 6.5km.	Rest	Run for 5km. Run the first 1.5km and the last 1.5km at level 4 and the middle 2km at level 7.	Rest	Run at level 4 for 5km.	Rest	Run at level 7 for 11km. Choose an off-road, undulating route.
Week 4	Run at level 4 for 6.5km.	Rest	Run for 6.5km. Run the first half at level 3 and the second half at level 8.	Rest	Run at level 4 for 5km.	Rest	Run at level 7 for 13km. Choose an off-road, undulating route.
Week 5	Run at level 5 for 6.5km.	Run at level 3 for 6.5km.	Run for 6.5km. Run the first half at level 3 and the second half at level 8.	Rest	Run at level 3 for 5km.	Rest	Run at level 7 for 8km. Choose an off-road, undulating route.
Week 6	Run at level 5 for 6.5km.	Rest	Run at level 5 for 6.5km.	Run at level 3 for 5km.	Rest	RACE DAY	

INSIDER TIP

'Pace yourself,' says last year's winner Alex Robinson. 'The Bog of Doom and Hills of Hell are in the last two miles, so you need to save some energy. Eat something substantial such as porridge for breakfast and then have a banana an hour before the start.'

INSIDER TIP

'The terrain will constantly break your rhythm with its twists and turns,' says race organiser Paul Magner. 'Train off the beaten track in the countryside. Uneven terrain keeps your body guessing and prepared for whatever is around the next corner.'

EFFORT LEVEL

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

FIVE OTHER OFF-ROAD RACES TO TRY

1 Walesby Whole Hog, Nottinghamshire
17th October
The Whole Hog is a multi-discipline adventure event in which competitors follow a 10km off-road running course loaded with all manner of tasks. The organisers promise both a lot of mud and a lot of fun.
eightpointtwo.co.uk

2 Sussex Obstacle Dash
21st November
This cross-country race will take you over horse jumps and fences, with plenty of water and dirt. Individuals or teams can enter, choosing between 5km or 10km over a course with an obstacle around every 500m.
urbanrace.co.uk

3 Salomon Turbo X Pure Filth, Hampshire
21st November
A crazy cross-country race with obstacles and no shortage of mud, this leg-sapping event will satisfy even the most hardcore runner. It includes the X-Zone, a 1.5km-long bog packed with extra water, mud and sand.
salomontrails.com

4 Grim Original, Hampshire
4th-5th December
A long hill descends into a water-filled ravine, followed by a series of puddle-strewn paths that lead to camouflage nets to crawl under – and that's just the start. Prepare to get very wet at this classic off-road challenge.
original.grimchallenge.co.uk

5 Full Montycute, Somerset
5th December
The 16km course of this race includes eight hills and just 400m of Tarmac surface, although there are still plenty of fast sections to test your speed. The gorgeous scenery of Ham Hill Country Park is a bonus.
fullmontycute.btik.com

For more challenging races and events to enter go to **mensfitness.co.uk/links/signmeup**

Words **Lucy Miller, Cristian Burbano** Training plan provided by Puma HellRunner creator and race organiser Paul Magner. Always warm up before and warm down after a training session with a five-minute jog at level 2

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RUN YOUR **BEST EVER** RACE

Got a race coming up? Follow these tips to post a new personal best

THE MONTH BEFORE

Train your core

As well as training runs on the appropriate terrain, try working on your core strength. A US study showed that runners who followed a core programme improved their posture, helping them translate power from the legs and propel the entire body forward – and shaving an average of 47 seconds off their 5K time. An impressively well-defined six-pack is just an incidental benefit, although a welcome one.

THE WEEK BEFORE

Refuel after training

Recovering after training is just as important as the training itself, which is why you should finish your sessions with chocolate milk. Studies published in the *International Journal Of Sports Nutrition And Exercise Metabolism* found that chocolate milk is an effective post-exercise drink thanks to its generous blend of high-quality protein and carbohydrates, which helps refuel exhausted muscles and rehydrate the body. Just watch out for that chocolate moustache.

THE DAY BEFORE

Drink water

Being more than two per cent dehydrated causes a decline in performance. Research from the University of Connecticut found that runners who started a 12km race in a well hydrated state crossed the finish line 4.5 per cent faster than when they ran it having been dehydrated at the start. Dehydration causes your blood volume to drop, which lowers your body's ability to transfer heat and forces your heart to beat faster. This can make you sluggish and slow.

THE NIGHT BEFORE

Get jiggy

Traditionally many coaches ban sex before a big race or match, but an Italian study – perhaps unsurprisingly – says otherwise. The study found that testosterone levels in men rose after an increase in sexual activity, boosting their competitive spirit. It will help you to relax for the event ahead too. As long as you don't have to trawl the bars for hours to find a willing partner, that is.

HALF AN HOUR BEFORE

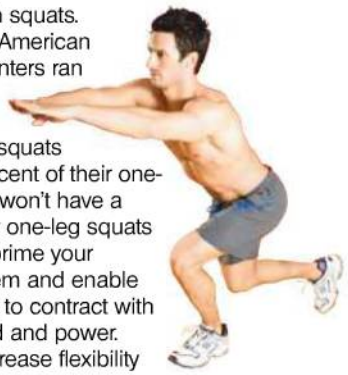
Sniff some mint

If you want to improve your PB, dab peppermint oil on your wrists and have a sniff before lining up on the start line. A US study found that peppermint odour decreased the participants' perceived levels of physical workload, effort and frustration compared with two other odours and a non-odoured control condition. The subjects also reported that they felt less fatigue, meaning they could run faster for longer.

FIVE MINUTES BEFORE

Squat

Warm up with squats. According to American research, sprinters ran significantly faster after three reps of squats using 90 per cent of their one-max rep. You won't have a barbell but try one-leg squats (pictured) to prime your nervous system and enable your muscles to contract with greater speed and power. You'll also increase flexibility in your hips and calves.



You'll find more tips to help you achieve a new PB at **mensfitness.co.uk/links/learntoshift**

Words **Lucy Miller** Photography **Shutterstock**

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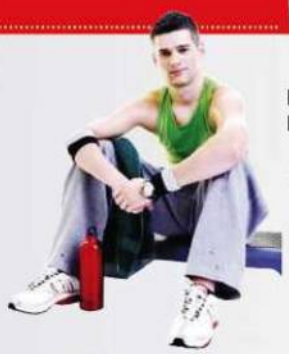

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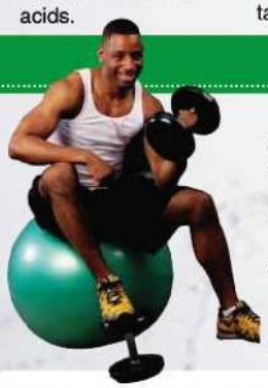

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Walk for real strength

Walking while carrying heavy objects will give you a super-strong lower body

If you want to make real progress in your sports performance, you need to go for a walk – a farmer's walk, to be precise. 'Nothing else will strengthen your ankle joints more effectively than a farmer's walk,' says strength and conditioning coach Nick Mitchell (upfitness.com). 'It'll work your lower body in a way it never usually gets worked and it'll develop strength and stability in all your supporting muscles.' That means you'll be less likely to get injured when you're on the receiving end of a crunching tackle. And you'll be able to harness the power you have in your bigger muscles to dish out some big hits yourself.

Sets 2-5
Time 40-70 seconds

Farmer's walk

- **Grip an Olympic bar in each hand and deadlift them so you're standing upright.**
- **Walk while holding and controlling the bars.**
- **Don't just walk in a straight line.**

These drills improve

- Lower-body strength and stability
- Anaerobic fitness
- Shoulder stability
- Grip strength

Variations

Towel-grip farmer's walk

Sets **2-5**
Time **40-70 seconds**
Wrapping a towel round the bars increases their thickness, which makes your forearms work harder. That will benefit anyone who does grappling sports, such as judo, which require a strong grip. You can take the towels off and complete your sets if you're finding it too challenging to finish.

Kettlebell farmer's walk

Sets **2-5**
Time **40-70 seconds**
Olympic bars are ideal for the farmer's walk because they swing around, so you have to control the movement, but you won't be popular if you're hogging two of your gym's three bars. Kettlebells or dumb-bells will give you a similar effect without requiring the same level of control, and are handy if you've never tried this before.

Words **Jon Lipsey** Photography **Duncan Nicholls** Model **Fabio Santos@WAthletic** Kit supplied by Escape Fitness (escapefitness.com) and Asics (asics.co.uk)

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WIN AN iPOD TOUCH

Plus accessories and a pair of Audéo Perfect Fit Earphones

Men's Fitness has teamed up with Phonak to give you the chance to win an iPod Touch plus a pair of Audéo Perfect Fit Earphones.

The new Audéo Perfect Fit Earphones, developed by Phonak AG, come with ergonomically designed foam tips which mould to the shape of the wearer's ear, providing a comfortable, secure fit and reducing external noise by up to 23 decibels. This allows the wearer to enjoy crystal-clear sound quality at a lower volume, cutting the risk of hearing damage.

The Perfect Fit Earphones weigh just 14g and include filters that allow bass and treble levels to be configured to fit the listener's preference. They are compatible with all standard MP3 players and devices with a 3.5mm stereo jack.

The lucky winner will receive an iPod Touch 64GB and a pair of Audéo Perfect Fit Earphones, as well as a leather case and a screen protector. Nine runners-up will receive the headphones.

Audéo Perfect Fit Earphones cost from £119.99. For more information visit audeoworld.com.

How to enter

Just go to mensfitness.co.uk/audeo and answer this question.

By how many decibels do the Audéo Perfect Fit Earphones reduce external noise?

A) 17
B) 30
C) 23

Closing date: 27th October 2010

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

On completing and submitting this competition, you will automatically be entered into a draw for one of these prizes. No correspondence will be entered into and the winners will be notified by post, email or phone within 28 days of the closing date. The competition is not open to employees of Dennis Publishing or participating companies. No cash alternative will be offered. The prizes described are available at the date of publication. Events may occur that render the promotion or the awarding of the prize impossible due to reasons beyond Dennis Publishing's (publisher of *Men's Fitness*) control, which may at its discretion vary or amend the promotion and the reader agrees that no liability shall be attached to Dennis Publishing as a result thereof. Proof of emailing will not be accepted as proof of delivery and no responsibility can be accepted for entries lost, delayed, mislaid or for any technical failure or for any event which may cause the competition to be disrupted or corrupted. In order to determine an outright winner or winners to a competition, the Editor reserves the right to request entrants to take part in an eliminating contest (or 'tie breaker'). Where for any reason there are more winners than prizes on offer, the Editor reserves the right to conduct a simple draw to determine the winner or winners of the prizes. Unless otherwise stated, entry to all competitions is restricted to entrants of 18 years of age or over. Names of winners will be available on receipt of a request enclosing a stamped self-addressed envelope to: Competitions Manager, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1T 4JD. If the winner of a competition is unable to take up a prize for any reason, the Editor reserves the right to award it to an alternative winner, in which case the first winner chosen will not be eligible for any share of the prize whatsoever. The Editor's decision is final and it is a condition of entry to any competition that the entrant agrees to be bound by these rules whether they be published or not, and that the decisions of the Editor and judges on any matter whatsoever arising out of or connected with the competition are final. No purchase of the magazine is necessary and no more than one entry per household. Competitions open to UK residents only, unless otherwise stated.

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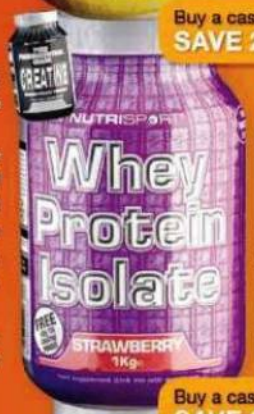

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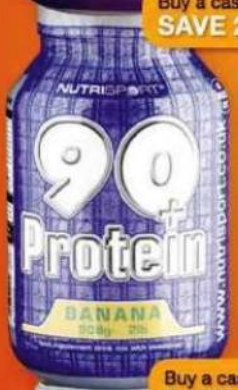

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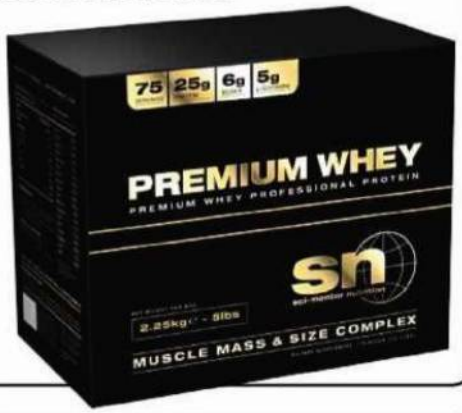

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TAKE A RUNNING JUMP

Combining speed, endurance and seriously powerful calves is the key to 400m hurdling success. European champion Dai Greene explains how he gets in winning shape

Words **Joel Snape** Photography **Tom Miles, Getty**

Dai Greene

Age 24
Height 1.86m
Weight 70kg
Achievements
■ 2009 Silver medallist, world championships (4x400m relay)
■ 2010 Gold medallist, European championships

How much technical training do you do?

I do running drills before every running session, but I only do one hurdling session a week. In that I'll do hurdling drills to begin with, then go over three or four barriers to warm up, then do two runs to hurdle ten, which is pretty much the whole race. I don't believe in doing too much technique work – practising indoors doesn't mean much when you've run 360 metres and you've got one hurdle to go. The best way to practise hurdling under fatigue is to do it.

What goes through your mind when you clip a hurdle?

It depends how bad it is. If I brush one I know my stride pattern well enough to stay calm. Once or twice I've absolutely clattered one and almost fallen out of my lane, which is when I know I have to overstride to get back in a pattern.

'Once or twice I've absolutely clattered a hurdle and almost fallen out of my lane. Usually it makes me push on'

Usually it gives me a kick up the arse and makes me push on.

Do you have to watch your weight?
I'm disciplined and I want to eat what's right. I'll have a big lunch and dinner, and snacks between them, and I'll take creatine and beta-alanine because they work very well together. When the season comes around I don't eat as much because running's not as demanding as training.

What's your next big event?
The Commonwealth Games are coming up in October. That's going to take something similar to what I did in Europe to get a medal. Then I'm working towards the world championships in 2011, and the London Olympics.

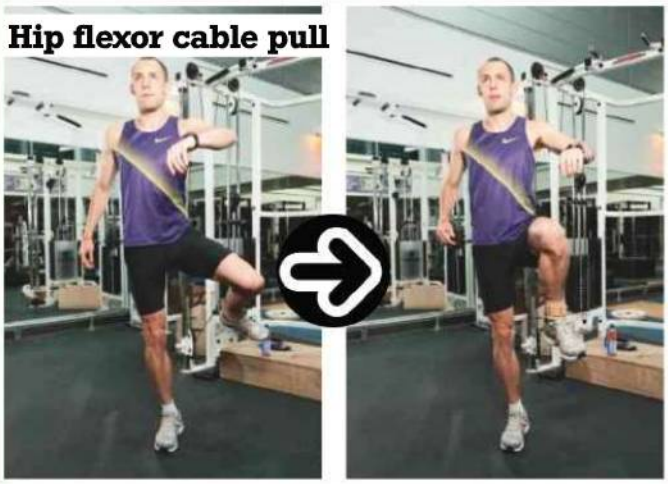
Are you already planning for the 2012 Olympics?
It'll be the highlight of my career if everything goes to plan. We had a lot of support at the British Grand Prix in August – I think maybe the nation took a little bit of notice of athletics this summer because we haven't done so well in other sports, and that support should be massive when London comes around.

Are you confident of success in 2012?
I don't mind if I run 47.7sec and come third, because I'll have done a fast time [Green's current outdoor PB is 47.88sec]. All I can do is improve my performance – I can't affect anyone else's. But I just want to get a medal.
Dai Greene is an ambassador for Myprotein (myprotein.co.uk)

Dai Greene's hurdling workout

Part 1 Strength and power

'At the start of the training season we'll do 45-minute runs, and more aerobic work where we don't push the heart rate up too much,' says Greene. 'Around January we'll do track reps, going for 300-400m reps – a lot, maybe as many as ten. It's similar with gym work: I'll start with high reps, then build up to lower reps with more weight. It's to get the volume in so I'm strong enough to do the short, sharp work.'

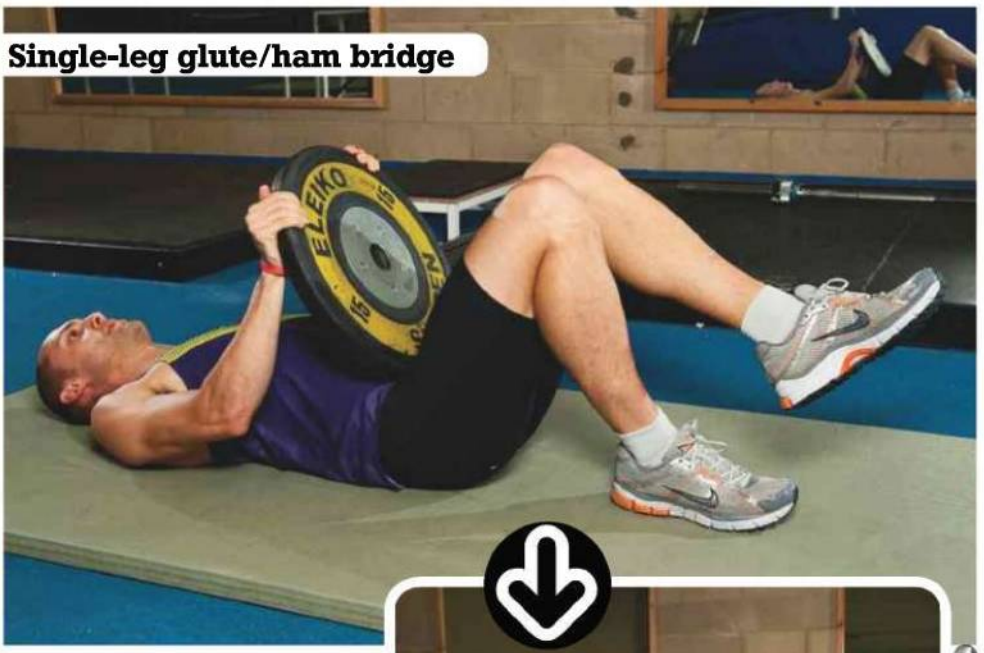


1 Hip flexor cable pull

Sets 2
Reps 10 each side

- Strap a cable attachment around your ankle and bring your leg up and to the side, then forward, before lowering it.
- Your leg should mimic the movement the trailing leg makes when it clears a hurdle.

Greene says 'This isolates the muscles around the hips. It's easy to recover from.'

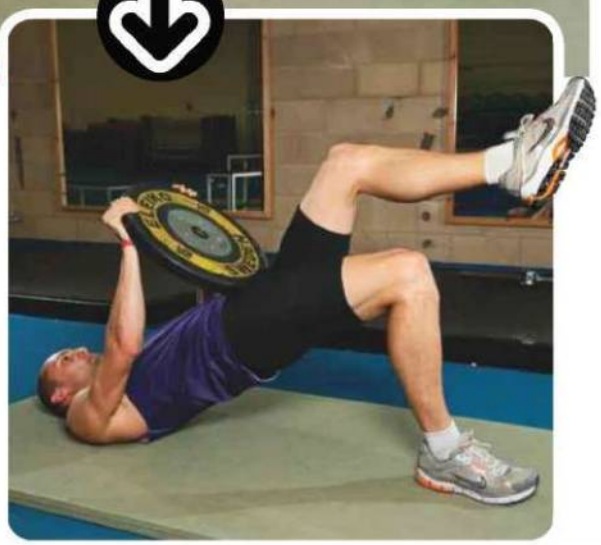


2 Single-leg glute/ham bridge

Sets 3 **Reps** 10 each side

- Keep one foot on the floor close to your glutes and the other in the air, holding a weight plate on your stomach.
- Push up until your knees and shoulders are in a straight line. Try to be explosive on the upward movement.

Greene says 'I'll usually do around 70kg on this but I've gone as high as 90kg. This really gets your glutes firing. Don't cheat by curving your spine.'



3 Hang snatch

Sets 3 **Reps** 5

- Start the move holding the bar just below your knees, with a wide 'snatch' grip, roughly double-shoulder width.
- Explode upwards, then duck under the bar to 'catch' it with straight arms and bent legs. Stand up straight to finish the move.

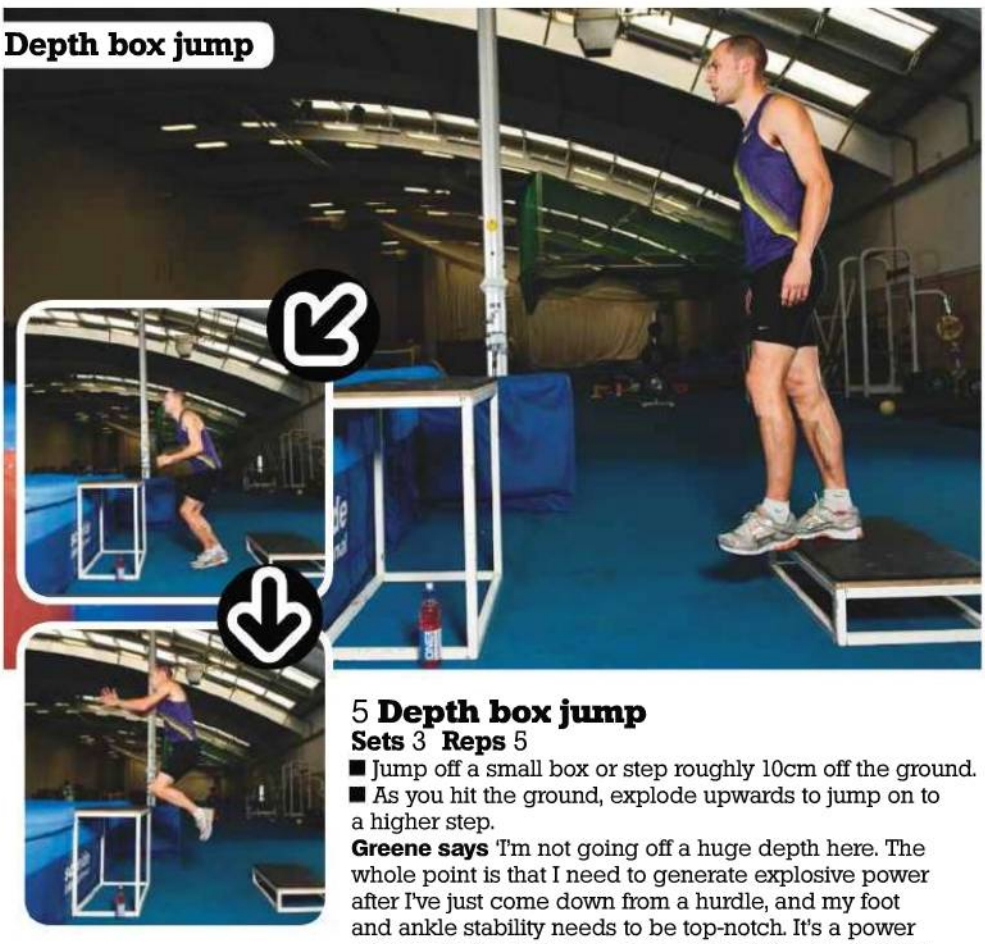
Greene says 'As an athlete, the only time my legs are close to 90° is when I'm in the blocks. When I need to produce power, they're closer to 120°, which is the starting position for the hang snatch.'

4 Single-leg step-up

Sets 2 **Reps** 8 each side

- Holding a barbell across your shoulders – or a pair of dumb-bells if you're less confident – step up on to a box and raise your trailing leg until it's at a right angle to your body.
- Stay upright and repeat the move on both sides.

Greene says 'You're driving the knee up into what's called an A-frame running position to finish. Posture's important, so try not to sag forwards. I'll often superset this with a hang snatch.'



5 Depth box jump

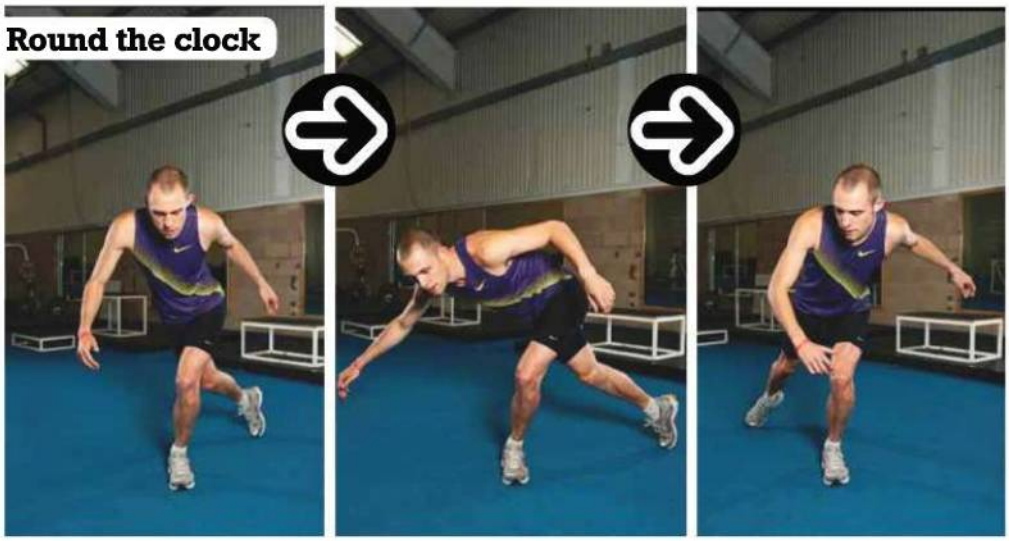
Sets 3 **Reps** 5

- Jump off a small box or step roughly 10cm off the ground.
- As you hit the ground, explode upwards to jump on to a higher step.

Greene says 'I'm not going off a huge depth here. The whole point is that I need to generate explosive power after I've just come down from a hurdle, and my foot and ankle stability needs to be top-notch. It's a power exercise but doubles up as an ankle stiffness exercise.'

Part 2
Foot and calf stability

A vital part of hurdling is landing without a wobble. 'The biggest force applied is at the point of contact and people often forget that,' says Greene. 'Everyone builds up their glutes and hamstrings, but strengthening your feet to take the impact is essential.'



1 Round the clock
Sets 2 **Reps** Until fatigue

- Stand on one foot and use the other one to touch the numbers on an imaginary clock face around you.
- As you warm up, touch further away and lower your centre of gravity to make the exercise harder.

Greene says 'Don't make this easy on yourself – go for the difficult "numbers" and keep going until you're tired.'

2 Toe tap
Sets 3 **Reps** Until fatigue

- Bounce up and down on your toes, making sure you just move vertically without letting your feet move forwards. If the move feels easy, you're doing it wrong.
- Build up to holding a weight plate above your head, keeping your back straight to emphasise your posture.

Greene says 'This isn't as easy as it looks. It took me six weeks of doing this every day to start doing it with a weight. Your feet shouldn't be going forward or backwards, just straight up and down.'

3 Band stability swing
Sets 3 **Reps** Until fatigue

- With a resistance band around one ankle and the other end secured, move your foot laterally, then turn 90° and repeat.
- Do the move in all four ranges of motion before changing legs.

Greene says 'Lots of my team-mates will say, "that's easy," but then they'll find they can't do this at all.'

For Dai Greene's running drills go to **mensfitness.co.uk/links/daihard**

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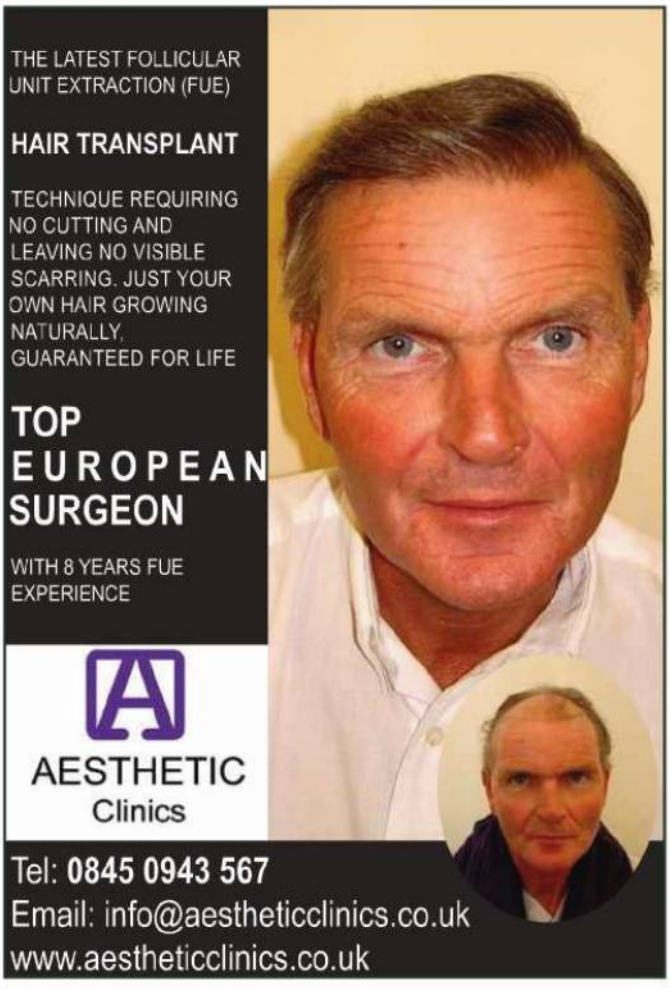

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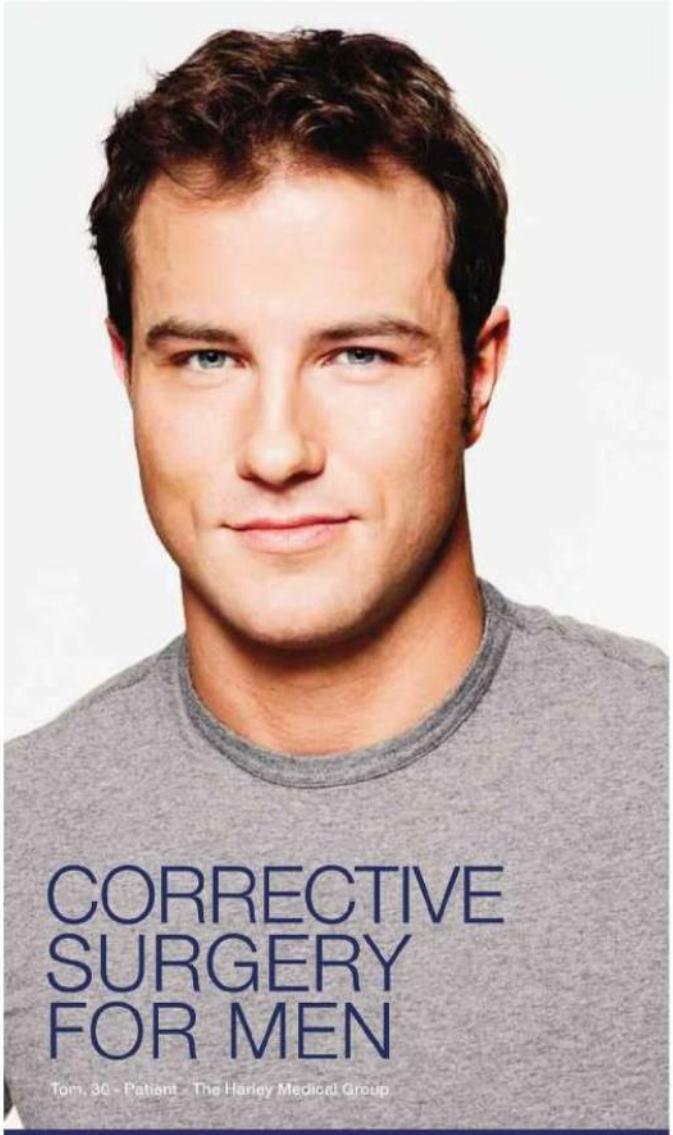

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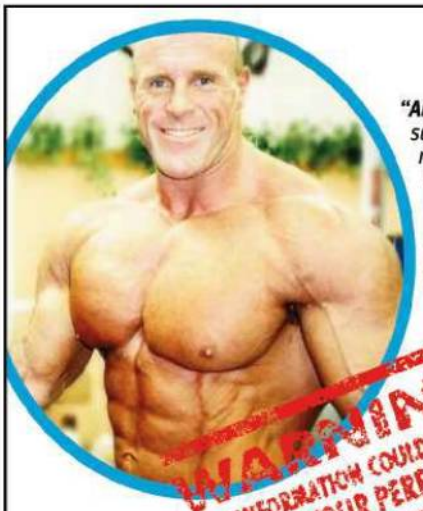

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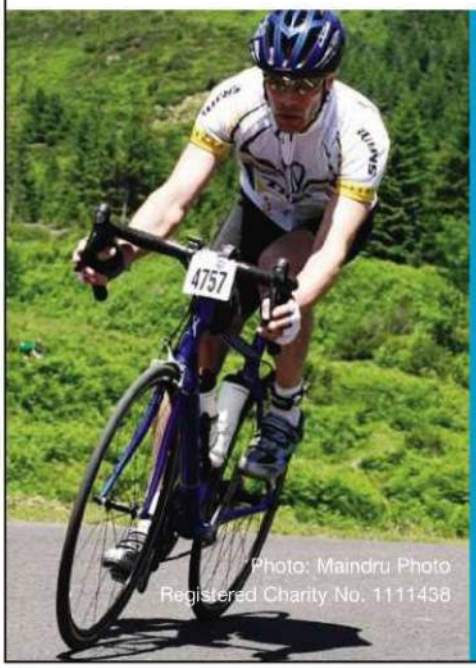

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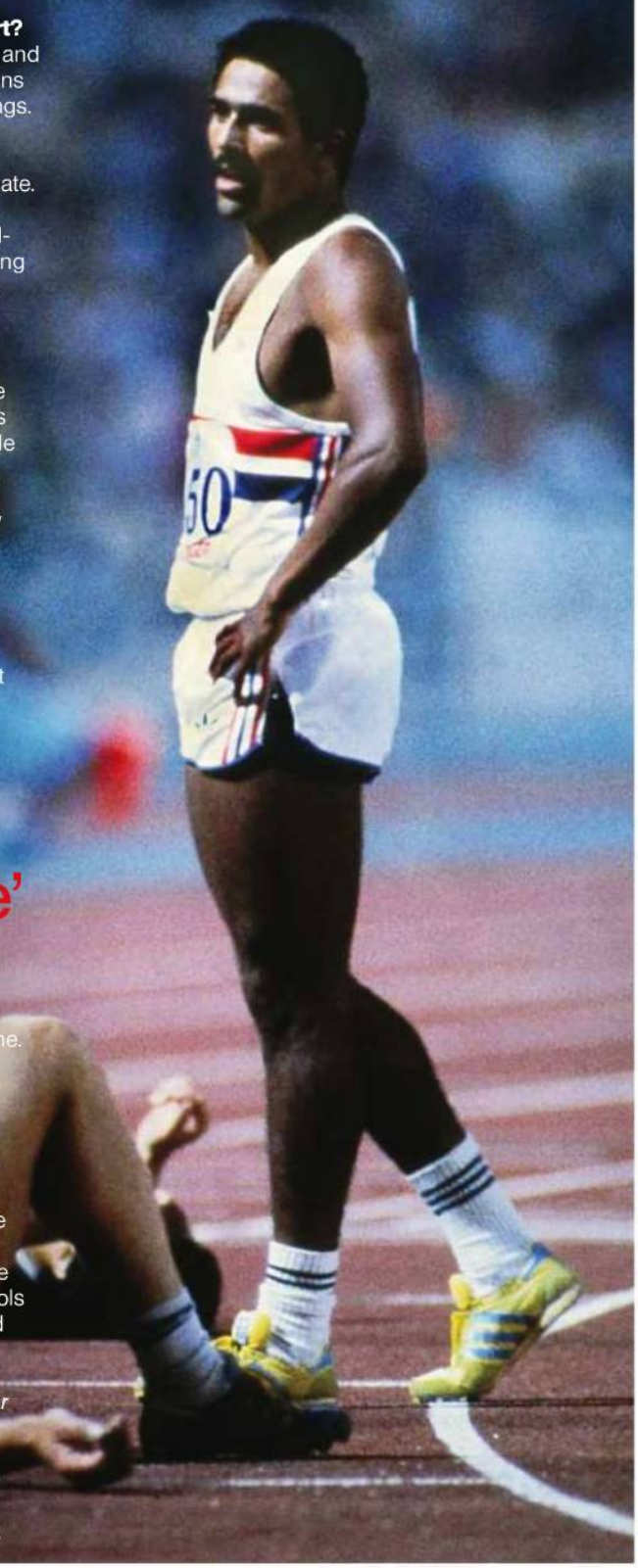
Last Word

DALEY THOMPSON

The decathlon legend on 56-hour training weeks, turning out for Mansfield Town FC and playing his own computer game



How did you train to be good at ten different events?
In a decathlon, nine of the events are about speed and power. Only one is about endurance. You need to concentrate on speed training and make sure your fitness is good enough so you can get round the 1,500m.

Which was your favourite?
I liked all the events. My favourite thing is winning. You need to try hard in all of the events but, physically, it's not as bad as people think. The real test is mental. You need to make sure that mentally you don't crack.

In a famous photo from Moscow 1980 just after the 1,500m (pictured here), everyone else is on the floor but you're still on your feet. Was that a mind game?
No, I was looking for a space to lie down! In truth, the competitions were easier than the training. I'd do thousands of javelin throws in training every month, for example, but only three in competition.

How much did you train?
I trained six to eight hours a day, seven days a week, and I had people around me I considered to be the best in the world. They made sure the training wasn't too repetitive.

You played professional football after retiring from athletics. Why did you decide to switch sports?
I played for Mansfield Town and Stevenage. I hadn't played since school, so I thought it'd be fun. If I'd been a footballer rather than an athlete, I'd have been awesome but I wouldn't have been Pele.

Were you good at any sport?
I could pick up sports quickly and easily but my physiology means that I'm good at explosive things.

Do you still train?
Cross-training is what I advocate. Nobody gets worse at one thing by becoming a better all-round athlete. So I do everything from Pilates to Olympic lifting.

Do you have any training advice for our readers?
Little and often is better. You're better off doing 20-45 minutes most days rather than a couple of hours one day and nothing for a week after that because it's killed you. And try as many different things as you can.

Did you ever play the computer game *Daley Thompson's Decathlon*?
I did. I wasn't bad. I could beat my own records in the javelin and long jump but I never got the hang of the hurdles. We'll hopefully be bringing out an iPhone application of the game.

What are you hoping the London 2012 Olympic Games can achieve?
It's going to be the greatest Games ever but we have to use it as a platform to improve the health of the nation. The Government needs make sure that sport is available in schools every day. And parents should be encouraged to do active things with their kids too.

Daley Thompson is a member of the Laureus World Sports Academy, supporting the work of the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation. For more information visit laureus.com.

'If I'd been a footballer rather than an athlete, I'd have been awesome'

Words **Jon Lipsey** Photography **Colorsport**

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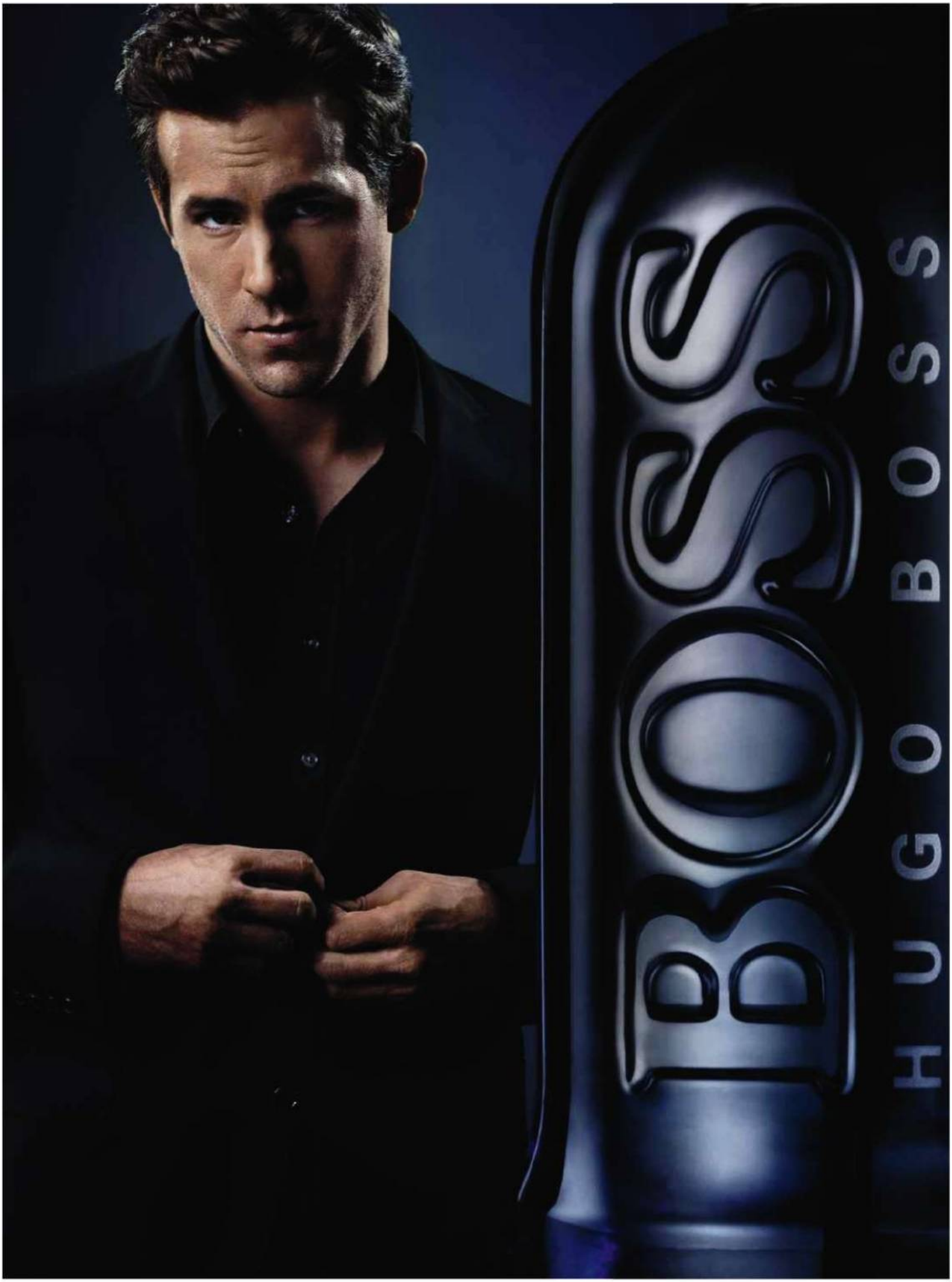

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