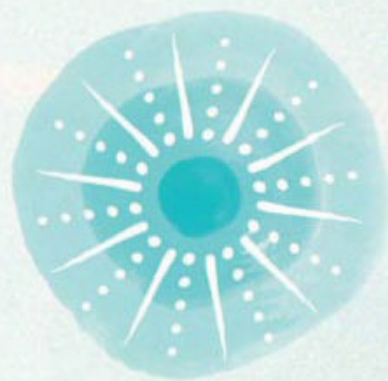




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Straight-Shooting on Identity,
Mindset and Tokyo 2020. *p68*

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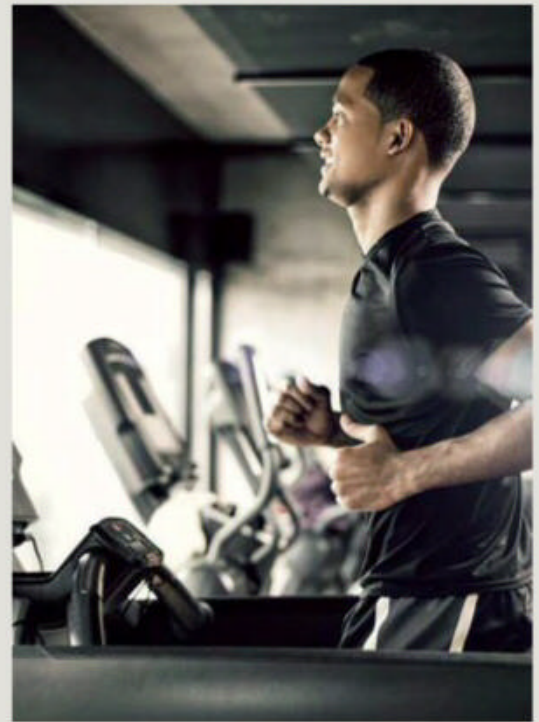
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COVER GUY:
PATTY MILLS

PHOTOGRAPHED BY:
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Superstar baller Patty Mills tells you why tapping into your roots will strengthen your resolve when the pressure's on.

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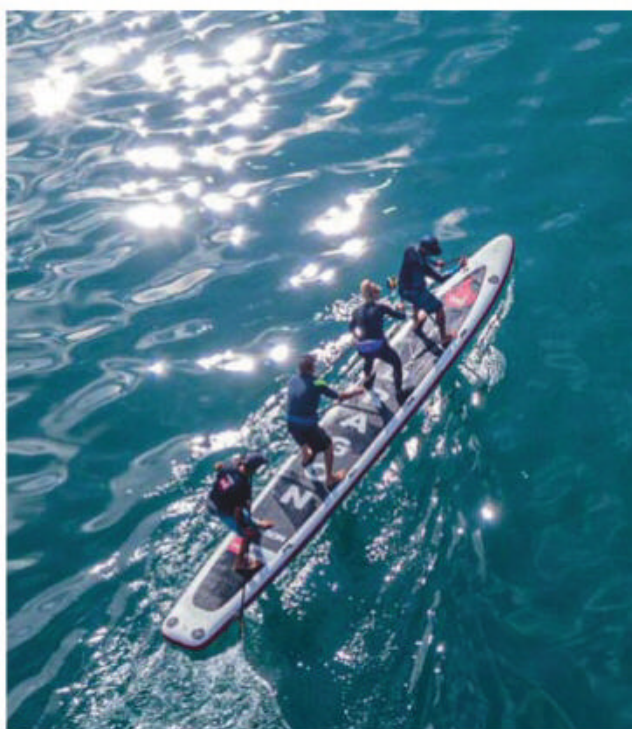
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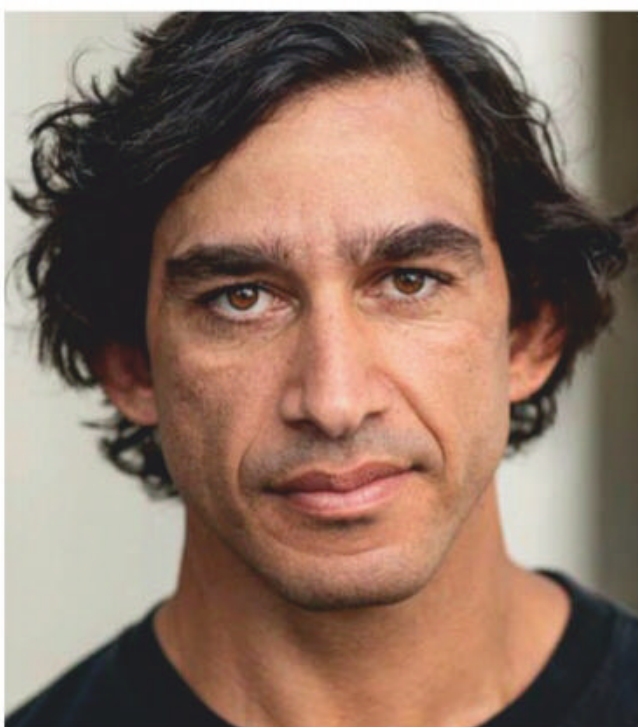
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Michael B. Jordan, Pacer Belt Bag, Edge, New York City

EDITOR'S LETTER



Men's Health Australia



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"YOU CAN'T BE WHAT YOU CAN'T SEE"

Fifteen years ago, as a bright-eyed sports-science major, I had a vision of saving the world through sport. Like many Australians, I'd witnessed first-hand the uplifting effects of a hometown Olympics in Sydney and carried this optimism into my higher education. While I didn't have the specifics figured out, one thing was for sure: sport, athletes and the culture and infrastructure around them were key to righting so many of the injustices I perceived in society.

Fast forward to 2020 and we're on the cusp of another Olympiad. In this increasingly divisive era, the power of sport to set us on the right path seems more vital than ever. In that spirit, I invited Casey Conway, Head of Diversity and Inclusion at Rugby Australia, to co-write this letter, a process that has renewed the hope and strengthened the resolve that ignited my career.

As Casey nailed in the drafting of this letter, sport provides a sense of purpose and belonging that leads to lasting physical and mental health benefits. We know that using sport as a tool for social inclusion can have not only a positive impact on an individual's health but benefit the community as a whole, Conway says. So, we must ensure we approach it using a lens of diversity and equality, ensuring we provide opportunities for everyone to participate, regardless of their individual circumstances.

We all know that people from minority communities (disability, LGBTQ, multicultural and First Nations) face numerous social and systemic barriers to participation – racism, ableism, homophobia or a combination of these. Sport, the media and the relevant administrative and corporate bodies have the power to address the imbalance of representation, thus creating a platform for these athletes to shine.

At Rugby Australia, Conway and his team have a philosophy called #PartOfMore that uses the power of storytelling to share the impact rugby has in people's lives, on and off the field. At *Men's Health*, we remain similarly committed to bringing you aspiration and inspiration through wide-ranging storytelling, 12 months a year.

When we think about athletes as role models, we need to look at why their stories are held in such high esteem. Role models are those who possess qualities and traits to which we ourselves aspire. They have worked hard to get to where they are and have overcome countless obstacles to reach the top. They are dedicated and conscientious – and they get up when they fall. They also carry tremendous responsibility.

As I hang out high above Denver in Patty Mills' Four Seasons suite, I know that based on this criteria we've aced our April cover choice. Mills' playlist alone warrants his *MH* cover crown, an eclectic combination of artists and songs I'll take to the grave... for his sake. Similarly inspiring are Johnathan Thurston (p.18) and Alex de Minaur (p.119).

Our combined hope in 2020 and beyond is that we can make sport and health accessible to everyone. And that those we see on the field, within these pages and in positions of influence, reflect that diversity. That way, we all win.

Scott & Casey

Scott Henderson

menshealth@pacificmags.com.au



ON THE BALL: HENDERSON TAKES A TIME-OUT WITH PATTY MILLS.

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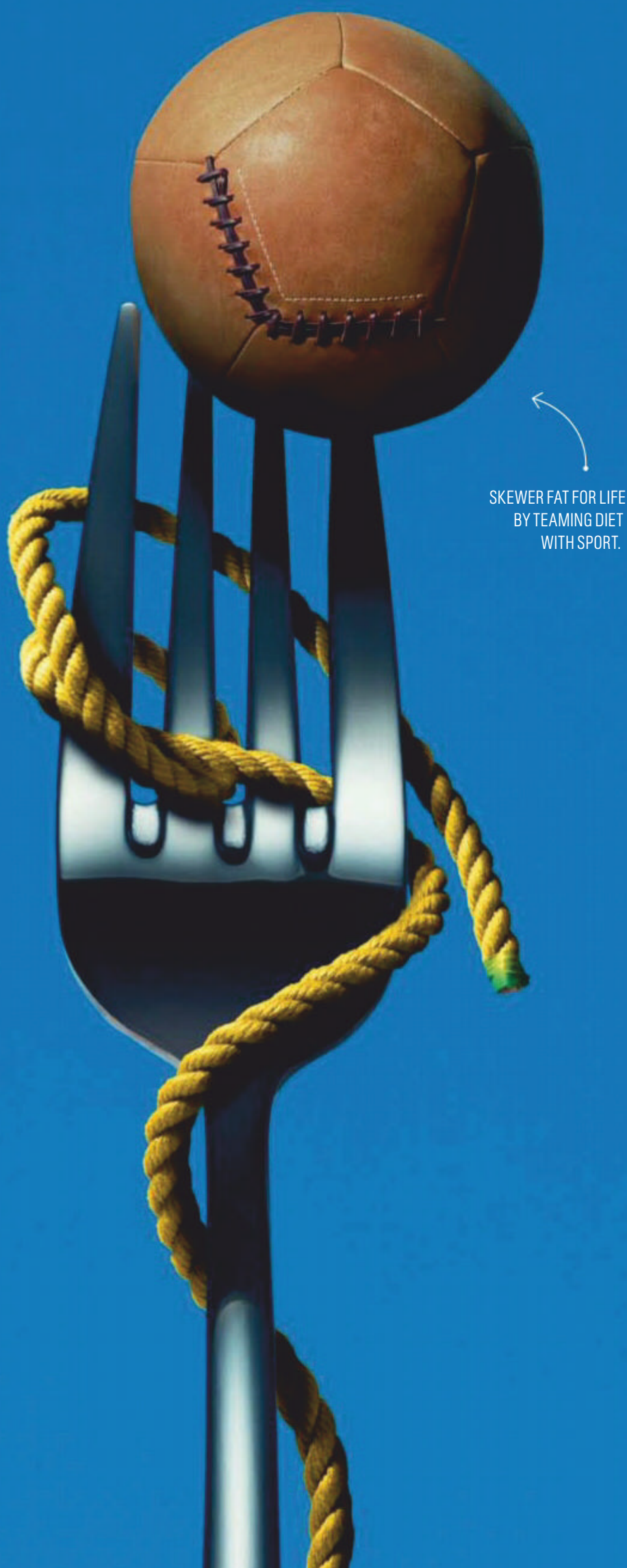
Is food or exercise more important for weight loss? GK

★ **We've all been guilty** of it: smugly swallowing a mouthful of greens before regurgitating platitudes such as, "Abs are made in the kitchen" or the equally misguided, "It's 90 per cent diet." But without rebooting training and diet in harmony, you'll never tip the scales in your favour. Scientists at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle confirmed this when they conducted randomised trials on overweight participants. A clean diet alone was nowhere near as effective for fat loss as combining good nutrition with exercise. In fact, after five years, as many as 95 per cent of dieters will be back where they started, and 41 per cent will have regained more weight than they lost. It's exercise that makes a plan stick. As well as being beneficial in isolation,

training has been proven to play a key role in diet adherence. Most of us underestimate the mental toughness required to resist cravings, but research shows that even small amounts of physical activity can strengthen willpower. Hitting the gym not only burns kilojoules; it also steels you against the lure of the Golden Arches. The same can't be said of a kale smoothie.

If you're training hard, you have the opportunity to break from nutritional austerity with a cheat day, too. Rely exclusively on food for transformation and there's no room for slip-ups: you can't burn off extra kilojoules without exercise. Workouts are what turn any reboot into a sustainable lifestyle, rather than a short-lived dietary denial. To make a sustainable assault on belly fat, lace up your trainers.

"Rely exclusively on food for transformation and there's no room for slip-ups"



SKEWER FAT FOR LIFE
BY TEAMING DIET
WITH SPORT.

ANCIENT SOLUTION TO A MODERN PROBLEM

Q *It's been two months since my wife gave birth and she's still overweight. Should I tell her she's risking her health?*

A *Truth uttered before its time is always dangerous.*

-Mencius; b. 372BC

TEXT A NUTRITIONIST

My new diet is killing me. What can I buy that won't leave me hungry in 15 minutes? Any tips? I've heard that protein will help, but my fridge is already stocked with boring chicken breasts. 🙄

Well, protein is digested slowly, so it'll help you feel full. But to actually be full, you need to bulk up your meals with low-kilojoule foods, such as beans and pulses. They're high in fibre, which also balances blood-glucose levels, keeping your hunger levels steady.

OK. Right now, I'm in the pasta aisle at Coles. I've heard white carbs are bad, but the labels on the back say they're pretty low in kilojoules ... 🤔

That's true, but they're quickly digested and easy to overeat. Pasta hits the spot, but you'll soon be hungry.

Bake some sweet potato fries in cayenne pepper instead. They're a delicious, slow-digesting alternative.

Dipped in mayo?

If you're batch cooking, the water content of stews can help. It's a tastier version of the old weight-loss trick of downing water before you eat. Try a one-pot of chicken, black beans, chopped tomatoes, celery, kale and spices.

Gotcha. Let's hope this keeps me away from the late-night donuts!

Rob Hobson, dietitian



ASK THE GIRLS IN THE OFFICE

★ Ask the *MH* girls the questions you can't ask anyone else. They're three women who speak their mind, so don't expect sugar-coated answers

Q **HOW DO YOU TURN A ONE-NIGHT STAND INTO A RELATIONSHIP?** - Rob

Harriet: It depends what happens after the one-night stand and how you leave it.

Lizza: I've had a relationship that started off as one-night stand.

Lucy: Someone you met out or ...

Lizza: I met a cute guy at a bar. We ended up going back to his place and then dated for about nine months.

Harriet: How did it keep going after that first night?

Lizza: Umm, he just ended up staying at my place for the rest of the weekend.

Lucy: I feel like it should be a natural progression like that. Who cares if it's a one-night stand versus a date? If you genuinely connect it will happen from there.

Harriet: He should send a follow-up text and see what the vibe is.

Lucy: Even make a joke about something that happened the night before.

Lizza: Just not a joke about the sex, though.

Lucy: Like, "I'm feeling really dusty. How about you?"

Harriet: If there's a bit of back and forth, then use that as an opportunity to ask them out for a date. If it doesn't seem like it's

going anywhere, don't push it.

Lucy: You can also suss out if she's keen based on what happened that night. If you went back to yours, did she leave early or linger? If it was at hers, did she want you to leave pronto?

Harriet: Suggesting going for breakfast is a good way to see if there could be something more.

Lizza: But this is all riding on the fact that you got her number, right? Otherwise ...

Lucy: True. What's the plan B if you didn't grab her number?

Harriet: If you know her name or have mutual friends, I don't think it's weird to send her a casual DM. What have you got to lose?

Fire off your query to [facebook.com/MensHealthAU](https://www.facebook.com/MensHealthAU)



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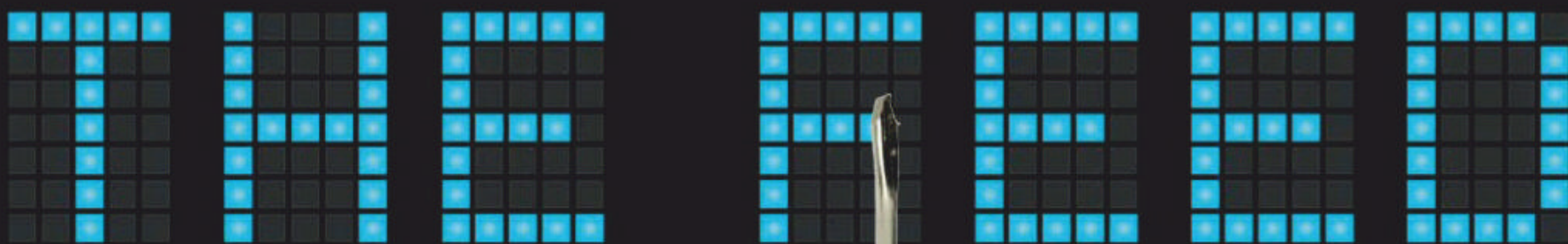
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TAKE OUT THE PAIN OF DOMS WITH A KEBAB

Can filling your post-training void with a köfte make you train harder? Yes boss, says science

SHOW US A MEAL more hotly anticipated than a post-workout refuel. But there's a catch: the kinds of foods you get in most monastic eating plans do little to sate your hunger. Gratifyingly, research suggests that you can stick a fork in self-denial, as the ultimate re-feed comes from a surprising source: your local kebab joint.

Granted, backlit menus aren't often associated with smart recovery meals. But fresh science on sumac – the dried powder of a red flower used to season a köfte – shows that the contents of your polystyrene box could spice up your next workout.

Researchers from King Saud University asked 40 athletes to complete an hour-long workout every day for four weeks. Half of them drank 300ml of sumac juice twice a day – no chilli sauce or salad, then – while the rest were given a placebo.

After two weeks, members of the first group reported less pain during their sessions and, by the end of the experiment, had significantly reduced pain and muscle fatigue. This enabled them to bounce back more quickly, leading to better performances.

To enjoy the benefits, combine lamb mince in a bowl with cumin, coriander, crushed garlic, chopped mint, dried chilli and generous shakes of sumac. Roll into balls, brush with oil and grill on a skewer, then serve with yoghurt and flatbread. Add chips if you will and chase with your liquid of choice.



FIRE UP YOUR GYM SESSIONS AND SKEWER DOMS.

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PORTER

A dark beer hiding a bright secret. The flavonoids found inside help to prevent blood clots and keep your heart healthy.



MOCHA

Coffee can reduce your risk of heart disease and liver cancer. Add some cocoa and it'll also boost cognitive ability and focus.

POP A CAP IN BELLY FAT WITH MULTIVITAMINS

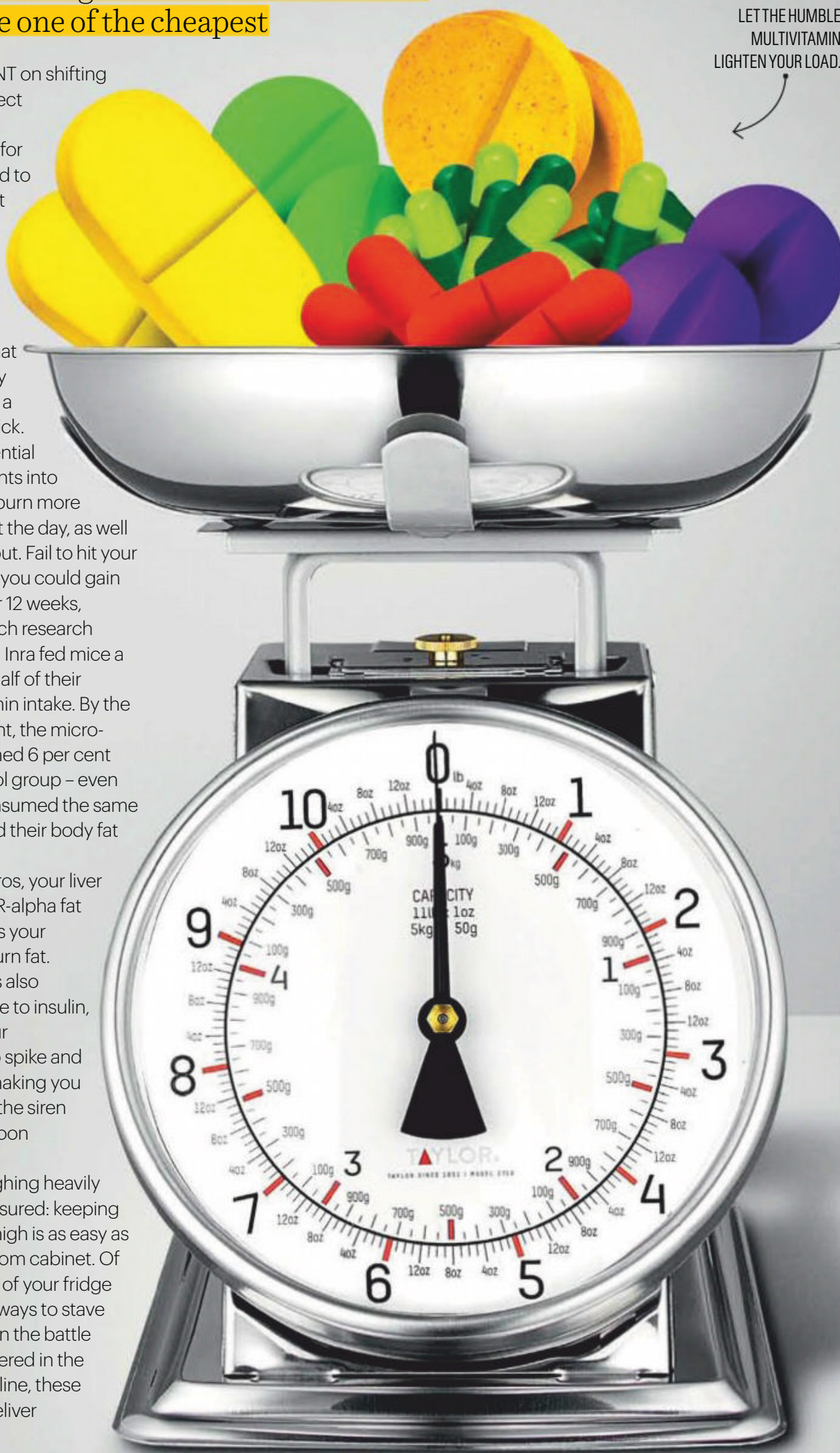
Forget caffeinated fat burners. The smartest way to keep all your weight-loss bases covered also happens to be one of the cheapest

WHEN YOU'RE INTENT on shifting timber, it makes perfect sense to sweat over macronutrients. But, for some reason, we tend to be less fired up about micronutrients: if we do pop a cursory multivitamin, it's a nod to general health. However, research suggests that by skipping your daily dose, you're missing a potent fat-burning trick.

Vitamins are essential for converting nutrients into energy, helping you burn more kilojoules throughout the day, as well as during your workout. Fail to hit your RDI consistently and you could gain more than a cold. For 12 weeks, scientists at the French research institutes Inserm and Inra fed mice a diet containing just half of their recommended vitamin intake. By the end of the experiment, the micro-deprived mice weighed 6 per cent more than the control group – even though they had consumed the same amount of food – and their body fat had doubled.

Without vital micros, your liver produces fewer PPAR-alpha fat sensors. This reduces your body's capacity to burn fat. Worryingly, your cells also become less sensitive to insulin, which can cause your blood-sugar levels to spike and slump more wildly, making you more susceptible to the siren song of a mid-afternoon choc-chip muffin.

If all of this is weighing heavily on your mind, rest assured: keeping your vitamin stocks high is as easy as opening your bathroom cabinet. Of course, the contents of your fridge offer more healthful ways to stave off deficiencies, but in the battle to keep all bases covered in the assault on your waistline, these small wonders will deliver big victories.



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Persist for:
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TO ACCELERATE
YOUR CARDIO, DO
MORE THAN JUST GO
THE DISTANCE.

GET ON THE FAST TRACK TO ENDLESS

Ironically, removing your finish line may help you surpass it. Here's how to make your Sunday long run fly by

WHEN YOU'RE CHASING DOWN cardiovascular fitness, preparing a detailed blueprint for your next 10K might seem like an eminently sensible tactic. But new research suggests that focusing on a specific distance will only hold you back. Instead, adopt the Forrest Gump-like method of running until you're done. It'll give your training extra mileage and boost your stamina.

Researchers at the University of Bologna and the footwear brand Asics

invited 22 sportsmen to the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah. They were challenged to run for as long as they could at their optimal pace, which had been calculated by performance specialists, who analysed statistics from the athletes' previous runs. On race day, they were asked to keep going until they dropped below their set pace three times. Free from the mental constraints of a finish line, the athletes pushed on an astonishing 24 per cent further than expected. The former

England footballer Wayne Bridge ran 34.1 km, almost double his predicted distance. What's more, the participants' average perceived effort didn't increase.

Running long distances is never easy, but leaving your tracking tech at home could be the simplest, surest way to ease your Sunday-morning dread. With no finish line, you might end up a long way from home, so start by testing out this new strategy at the local track. Plug into a podcast, and just get moving.



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POWER WITHOUT GLORY

Retired rugby league great Johnathan Thurston will continue to make his mark. It's just that it won't happen to the sound of applause

BY DANIEL WILLIAMS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHEW GIANOULIS

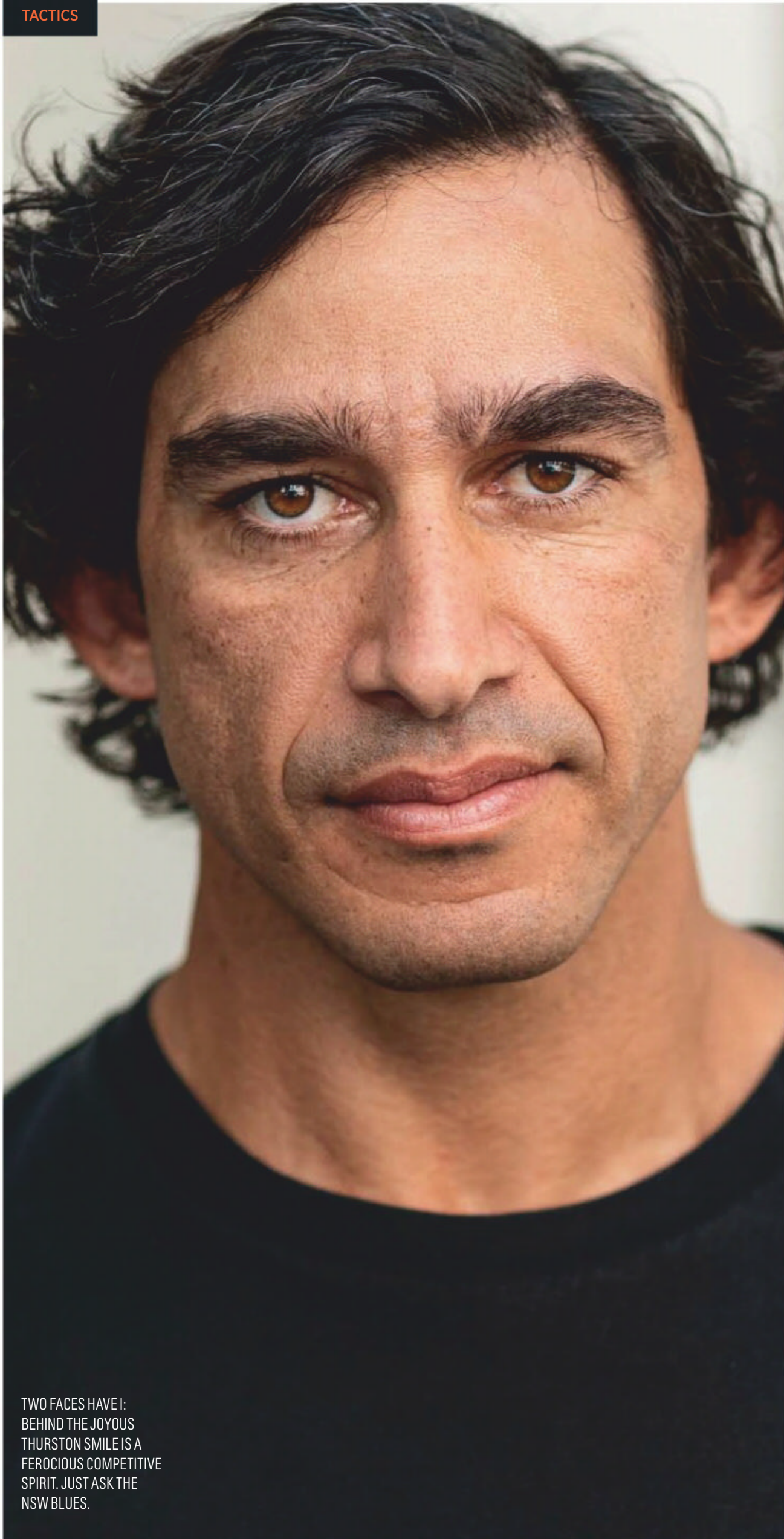
SPEND A LITTLE TIME with Johnathan Thurston and you start to appreciate something that hadn't seeped in despite having watched him play for what seemed like forever. He's a survivor. The latest (relatively mild) test of his mettle: a protracted *Men's Health* photo shoot in enervating heat and humidity on the streets of Townsville. Thurston's a big deal around here. And lots of passers-by – men, women, children; Indigenous and non-Indigenous townsfolk; the sharply dressed and the down at heel – seek their moment with him. He's friendly to everyone. He flashes his signature beaming smile. There's even a hint of the signature kookaburra laugh. Job done, he takes a load off in the airconditioned comfort of the grandly named The Drawing Room on Flinders, and between sips of coffee opens up about a more forbidding challenge he's been trying to wrestle into submission: The Void.

"The thought of life without rugby >

MAN ABOUT TOWN: THURSTON THOUGHT HE'D BLUNDERED WHEN HE FIRST TASTED TOWNSVILLE'S HEAT. IT'S NOW BEEN 'HOME' FOR 15 YEARS.







TWO FACES HAVE I:
BEHIND THE JOYOUS
THURSTON SMILE IS A
FEROCIOUS COMPETITIVE
SPIRIT. JUST ASK THE
NSW BLUES.

league scared me,” admits Thurston, who retired in 2018 having played roughly 400 games at rugby league’s pointy end – NRL, State of Origin, Test matches. “I didn’t know who I’d be. I knew the first year would be crucial. That’s when a lot of guys fall into, I suppose, depression.”

Eighteen months in, it’s a case of so far, so good. Life as a normal guy is going better than he’d expected. It helps he was prepared, having embraced the idea that the smart man retires not *from* something but *to* something. You keep busy. And something else was just as key: letting go. You have to jettison the idea that the highs you experienced as a player will be reproducible in another field. Forget it, advised Ben Creagh, the premiership-winning St George player who called it a day back in 2016. “There is nothing out there that is going to fill that void,” he told Thurston. “As soon as you’re at peace with that, your transition will go better.”

Thurston’s just 36. Young to be navigating retirement, though such is the lot of the athlete. He stands a better chance than most of thriving in the phases ahead because those hitherto have required him to rise above limitations, absorb disappointment and hold up under pressure. The time comes for all of us when identity needs to evolve from the singular (I am a footballer) to the multifaceted (I am a father; I am a commentator; I am a citizen of a world in crisis).

“All the knockbacks and setbacks up until now have made me more determined,” Thurston says. “They put a chip on my shoulder.” And a chip can be a powerful force.

MOVING ON

How do you let go of something that made you not only wealthy and famous but revered? Thurston won’t try to snow you. He thinks about his playing days sometimes, sure – the febrile crowds, the stirring victories, his own contributions to the latter. The flashbacks occur most often, he says, when he’s attending games, something he does regularly as part of Channel Nine’s commentary team.

He holds the records for most points for Queensland and most points for Australia, but it’s not tallies or even match-winning conversions that he thinks about. “For myself,” he says, “when the game was on the line, I wanted the ball in my hands. Didn’t matter if I was in a Cowboys jersey, a Maroons jersey or a Kangaroos jersey

... that's who I've always been. That's what I lived for and what I thrived on. But I'm not going to get that feeling again."

They were great times but they're over – and for good reason. When you ask Thurston whether he might have squeezed out another NRL season or two but for his troublesome shoulders, he's unequivocal. "Nah. Nah. Nah. I was done. I was ready. I was mentally and physically cooked. I'd had enough. It's a rollercoaster, rugby league. Mentally and physically, it's draining. It's great – running out for Origin. That was the easiest part of it all. It was the stuff during the week. And the next day ... waking up, struggling to get out of bed and being sore for the next three days."

Life's quieter now, of course. But at home with his wife, Samantha, and four daughters there's little time to dwell on past glories. His youngest wakes him in the predawn. The next couple of hours are chaotic as the elder three are readied for school and day care. Life as an unpaid taxi driver has begun: the three-time winner of the Golden Boot Award for best player in the world handles the drop-offs, the pick-ups and the girls' afterschool activities – swimming, dancing, horse riding. "I'm living my life through their eyes now, pretty much."

If that's the case – and it's almost certainly an exaggeration – what kind of dad does he want to be? A dad his girls want to confide in, he says. A dad they can count on for support when they need it. While administering discipline doesn't come easily to him, Thurston says, he's adamant on this point: "I'm not there to be their friend. I'm there to be their father."

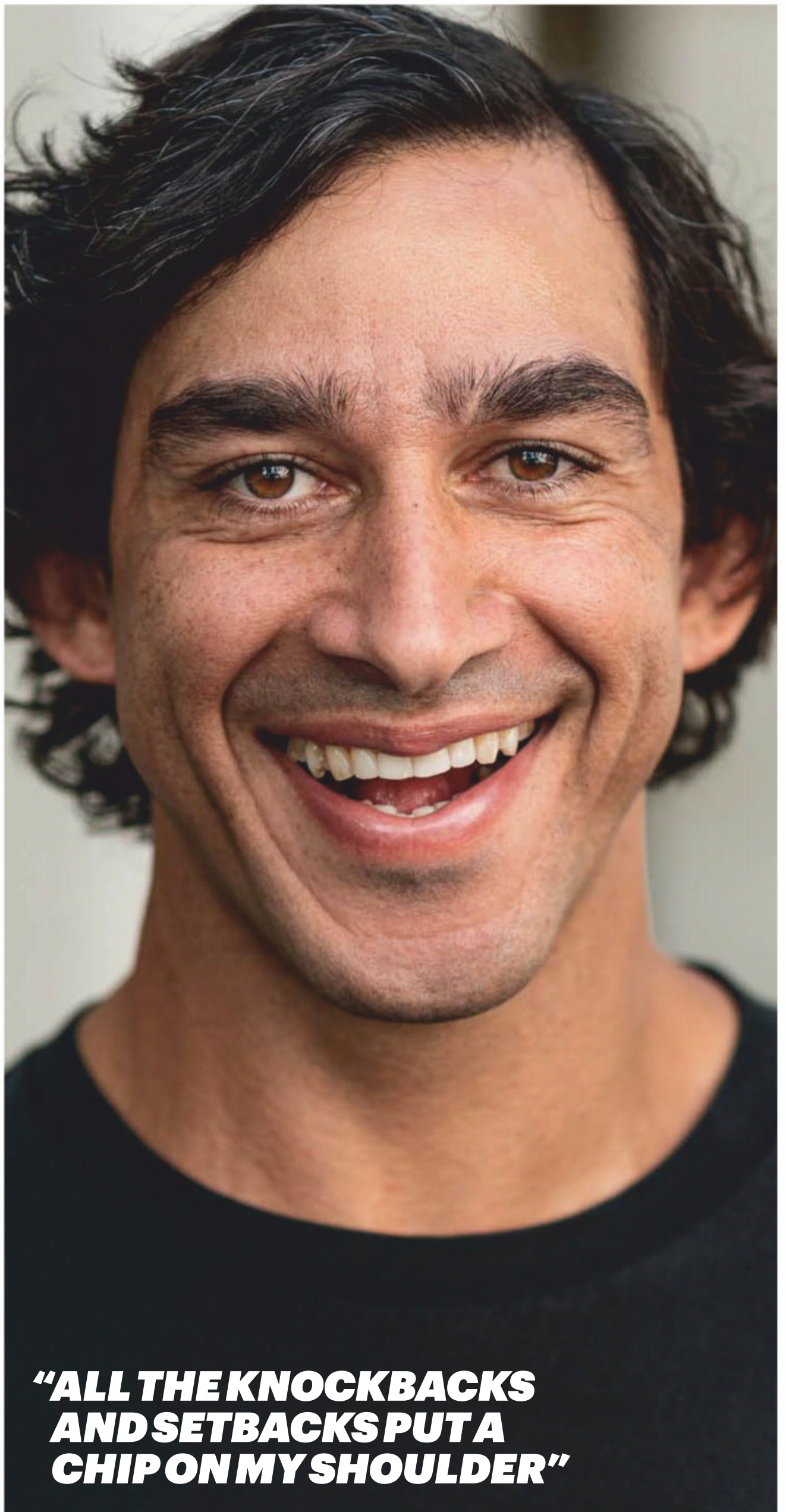
THE HARD ROAD

Thurston speaks highly of his own parents, but for whatever reason he lost his way in his early teens. It's all there in his autobiography: tales of truancy, underage drinking, drug use, theft. He was a delinquent, basically.

"You'll end up in jail, son, if you keep on this path," his Uncle Dean warned him.

Having grown up in Brisbane he was billeted at 16 to a Toowoomba family so he could start afresh at a new school. Though he came good, the shame lingered: "I have spent much of my life trying to be good to make up for the bad," he says.

What went wrong? In the mix was frustration caused by being continually overlooked for junior representative >



**“ALL THE KNOCKBACKS
AND SETBACKS PUT A
CHIP ON MY SHOULDER”**

teams because he was considered too small. Later, NRL scouts formed the same view. Before Canterbury at last took a chance on him and he came under the care of a then fledgling coach by the name of Ricky Stuart, Thurston worked a dreadful job as a butcher's assistant in a supermarket, mopping up blood and guts in a meat locker. The breaks took their time in coming at the Bulldogs so he needed a job in Sydney, too – in this case, handwashing cars for eight hours from 7am. Around the same time, homesickness hit him like a decade of bad tidings. It was all he could do to stick around.

The point is, nothing Thurston has now fell in his lap. And he's sure he's a better man for the struggle. "All that stuff made me more resilient," he says. "Everything I did was about achieving my dream to play rugby league. I'd write down my goals, and that would be the last thing I'd do before I went to sleep. And it would be the first thing I'd see when I woke up. So, even when I was in that cold room, I knew exactly why I was there. Even when I was washing car after car after car, I knew why I was doing it. Those experiences were just what were in front of me at the time. They were on the path I had to take to be where I am now."

STAYING SHARP

Just last week, Thurston tells me, his nephew visited from Brisbane and the pair went to watch a Cowboys training session. While there, Thurston stepped onto a set of scales for the first time since hanging up his boots. His final playing weight had been 87kg. The dial now read 85.5. "I was pretty happy with myself," he says.

Nowadays he's on guard against an expanding girth – a far cry from his early days at Canterbury, where he arrived from Toowoomba as a skin-and-bone 18-year-old and soon found himself in the gym surrounded by big bodies and a no-nonsense trainer ordering a "full-body session" (whatever that meant). Next thing he knew he was on his back, straining to bench-press 60kg. He managed two reps, while some of his clubmates were pumping 140kg. Embarrassed? Yep. Determined to improve? You bet.

"That was the hardest part for me – putting on weight and getting stronger," Thurston recalls. "I could run for days. But I struggled to put on weight no matter how much I ate. It wasn't until I started getting a bit older that I was able to add those kilograms and learn to carry them."



"WHEN YOU'RE PLAYING, THE RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD IS COMPETITIVE. WHEN YOU'RE RETIRED, IT'S A COMMUNITY."

THURSTON AND HIS FELLOW INDIGENOUS ALL STARS PREPARE FOR COMBAT IN 2015.



“ME AND MY WIFE ARE EXTREMELY WORRIED ABOUT THE FUTURE FOR OUR GIRLS”

Today, Thurston’s left the weight room behind. Even if he wanted to pump iron, his shoulders scream “no!” They gave him grief when he was playing and now they wake him once or twice a night, still protesting the interminable collisions, still punishing him for playing a game he really wasn’t built for.

So, for fitness, Thurston has reverted to what has always come naturally: running. His 5km efforts, with Townsville’s beaches as backdrop, take 20-22 minutes. He’s moving, in other words. “They get the heart pumping,” he says. “I get a sweat up.” He looks lean and strong. “I have my mum and dad to thank for that. They’ve passed those genes onto me. But I watch what I eat. I always have. And because I’m not training like I was, I’m really strict with what I put in my mouth.”

THE BIG PICTURE

Quitting football is a choice. Being competitive isn’t. That stays with you. It burns as fiercely as ever for Thurston, who’s found an outlet in golf. A member at Townsville’s Rowes Bay GC, he plays off a handicap of 13. While he’s solid off the tee and on the fairways, the problem, he says, is his short game: “It needs a lot of work, like my defensive game over the years.” He laughs, though mirthlessly. Truth is, golf when you’re misfiring is as much fun as walking into a spider web.

“It’s definitely a love-hate relationship. But you know the good thing? When you’re playing comp, you could be with anyone,” he says. “It could be a schoolteacher, a doctor, a bricklayer. Anyone can play.”

It’s a comment that reminds you there’s something unusual about Thurston. So many sportsmen retreat into their rarefied world. Thurston

never has. He’s always left open a portal to his true self. He lets light in and has allowed his own light to shine out. One example: his custom of giving away his headgear to a child in the crowd after every match. He liked seeing their joy. Another: how he *handed* the kicking tee back to the ball boy, rather than tossing it willy-nilly like a bored monarch.

You can attribute this generosity, this decency to at least two factors: his belonging to a very large family, and the connection he feels to his heritage.

“My culture lies at the very core of who I am,” says Thurston, who won the Human Rights Medal in 2017 for his work in boosting the number of Indigenous children receiving early-childhood education. Tellingly, he was palpably more emotional speaking at that ceremony than he ever was at a football awards night.

Not that he’s always felt his Aboriginality so intensely. The turning point came in 2010, when he realised during a bonding exercise with the inaugural Indigenous All Stars that he knew next to nothing about his family history, specifically on his mother’s side (his father is a New Zealand immigrant).

“Mum, can you tell me about our family – about our history?”

“I’ll do better than that,” she told him. “You can go see it yourself.”

So, with a bunch of uncles and cousins, Thurston piled into a rented mini-van and journeyed the six hours west from Brisbane to Mitchell, a sheep and cattle town with a population barely into four figures. “It was a weekend doing traditional dancing and meeting elders, and it had a real calming influence on me,” he says. Nor was the effect short-lived: “I wanted to use the platform I had through rugby league to make a difference

within the next generation, and that’s when I started as an ambassador for different programs,” he says. “When I was coming to the end of my career, I knew that was something I wanted to continue, so that’s why I set up the Johnathan Thurston Academy.”

His interest in the world also manifests as climate-change stress. “Me and my wife are extremely worried about the future for our girls,” says Thurston, who’s partnered with Instyle Solar to spread the word on how having solar panels on your roof will reduce your carbon footprint while saving you money. “Very scary what’s been going on the last few months,” he says.

Speaking of scary, his first attempts at rugby league commentary did nothing for his equilibrium. The former playmaker who was a master at knowing what to do and when had none of the same decisiveness when he swapped the Steeden for a microphone. “I didn’t know when to jump in.”

So, he watched and listened. And with the guidance of his Nine colleagues, he began feeling more comfortable as last season wore on. It was a matter, he says, of “having the confidence to give my opinion when it was needed”.

What sort of commentator would he like to be? Fearless? Analytical? Comical? “I’d like to give the viewer an insight into what the ball-player is thinking. That was my art, I suppose you’d say. I’m still learning.”

That said, “I’ve learnt a lot over the years,” he says. “I was certainly a bit of a ratbag for a while, where you think talent can get you by. But you quickly learn that it’s hard work. It’s preparation. There’s no substitute for those things.” ■

Johnathan Thurston is an ambassador for Instyle Solar.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN...

...! Overload My Liver?

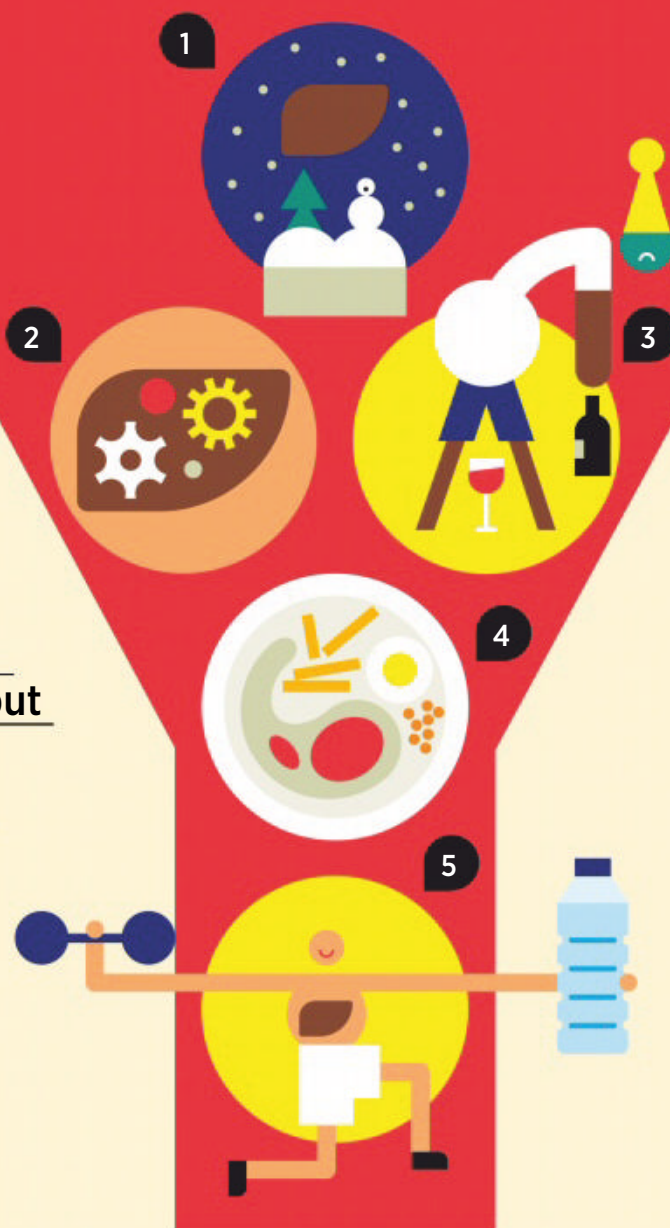
Perhaps you've been tough on your hardest-working organ, but its ability to bounce back is miraculous. We filter the facts

1 AN UNSUNG HERO

Those four glasses of champagne? Your liver has your back. That packet of choc-chip muffins? Few people realise that it's got you covered there, too. Your internal filter processes nearly everything you eat and drink, and certain periods of overindulgence can be overwhelming – giving it less time for crucial functions such as making the hormones you need to . . . well, live.

2 THE FIRST SIP OF BOOZE

When you have a drink, your liver converts alcohol into water and carbon dioxide, which you urinate or exhale. It also holds onto anything useful, such as the antioxidants in wine. But the metabolism of alcohol increases the levels of fats called triglycerides in your body. If you eat and drink reasonable amounts, you can use them up.



3 A FEW MORE DRINKS

"If you binge, then binge again, your liver doesn't have time to recover," says Dr Christopher Koh. The more you drink, the more your liver dumps those fats onto the "burn later" pile. As that pile grows, it causes inflammation and eventually kills off liver cells, leaving scar tissue that can lead to cirrhosis. Just a few modest sessions per week can lead to inflammation.

4 FOOD FOR THOUGHT

You don't even have to drink alcohol to harm your liver. Good-time foods (saturated fat, refined carbs, red meat), combined with holiday weight gain, can lead to non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD). This build-up of fat wreaks the same havoc as alcohol, leaving you with inflammation and scarring. Worst of all, NAFLD can develop in as little as six weeks if you really overdo it.

5 TIME TO HIT REBOOT

The good news is that your liver can regenerate, even without recourse to a charcoal smoothie or an overpriced beetroot juice. A single month without booze tames inflammation, while losing five per cent of your weight can reduce liver fat by 30 per cent. Count on these superpowers and enjoy yourself on occasion, guilt-free. Just remember to go easy most of the time so your body has a chance to undo the damage.

REST EASY IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT YOUR LIVER WILL LOOK AFTER YOU, WITHIN REASON.

Monday.



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THE HEALTH SNOB'S GUIDE TO

ROOT VEG

Diets that exclude all carbs are rooted in misguided macrophobia. Unearth total-body benefits with an ingredient upgrade that's grounded in science

1 DIG FOR VICTORY

Life on the low-carb bandwagon is a bumpy ride – you're likely to fall off before too long. Equally, supersets of brown rice and sweet potato can quickly become tiresome. The solution is to unearth the neglected nutritional benefits of root vegetables. Promote these alternative carbs from side dish to star of the show with the culinary know-how of Nick Deverell-Smith, chef patron at the gastropub the Churchill Arms (churchillarms.co). Believe us, you'll be hungry for an encore.

A CARROTS

Though they might not quite give you night vision, carrots are a must-eat for men. Packed with beta-carotene and vitamin E, they help to boost your sperm count and improve your prostate health.

B BEETROOT

When it comes to post-workout fuel, purple reigns. The high concentration of nitrates helps to accelerate recovery to keep DOMS at bay. Make beetroot a mainstay of your eating plan and they'll boost your long-distance fitness, too.

C FENNEL

Not only does this underrated bulb have a distinct aniseed flavour, it also bolsters your defences against the man-flu germs in your office. Its selenium increases the production of T cells, the terminators of your immune system that fight infection.

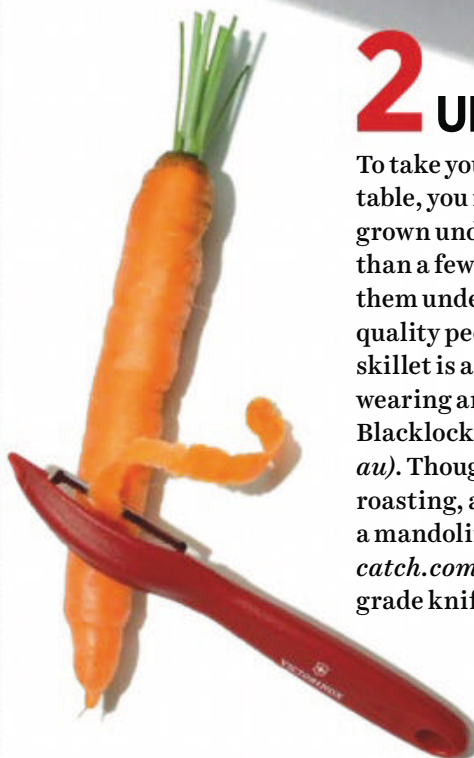
D CELERIAC

The celery root is high in potassium and vitamin K, which are crucial for heart health. An analysis of 16 observational studies found that a higher potassium intake was associated with a 13 per cent lower risk of stroke.



2 UNDERGROUND ARSENAL

To take your root vegetables from bland also-ran to top table, you need to upgrade your tools. Because they're grown underground, these ingredients may have more than a few lumps and bumps. Gussy them up by scrubbing them under the tap with a steel scrubber or use a high-quality peeler. It goes without saying that a cast-iron skillet is a must. Deverell-Smith recommends a hard-wearing and versatile pan – such as the 30cm Lodge Blacklock Cast Iron Skillet (\$149.95; kitchenware.com.au). Though it's not cheap, it'll endure years of frying and roasting, and plenty of burned bottoms. Finally, invest in a mandoline slicer (Progressive PL8 Professional; \$64.95; catch.com.au), which will allow you to fake Michelin-grade knife skills – just be careful not to lose a finger.



3 THE ROOTS TO TAKE

Whether you're flirting with flexitarianism or trying out Veganism, cutting meat from your fare needn't mean grazing on endless plates of flaccid salad. These simple yet hearty meals, created by Deverell-Smith, will fuel your progress and sustain your passion.



HIGH-POTENCY HARISSA, CARROT AND PUY LENTILS

SERVES 2

- Carrots, 150g
- Lentils, 60g
- Garlic, 2 cloves
- Thyme, to taste
- A bay leaf
- Fennel, 150g
- A red onion, ½
- Rapeseed oil, 2tbsp
- Harissa paste, 1tbsp
- Greek yoghurt, 2tbsp
- Maple syrup, a drizzle

METHOD

Preheat your oven to 210°C. Boil the lentils with the garlic, thyme and bay leaf. Chop the carrots, fennel and onion into chunks, then coat with rapeseed oil and roast for 10 minutes. Add the harissa paste and roast for a further 10 minutes. To serve, spread the yoghurt onto a plate, then top with the lentils, vegetables and a drizzle of maple syrup.



GO-FASTER BEETROOT CARPACCIO AND GOAT'S CHEESE

SERVES 4

- Beetroot, 3
- Rock salt, handful
- A blood orange, segmented
- Goat's cheese, 100g
- Hazelnuts, 100g

METHOD

Preheat your oven to 200°C. Roast the beetroot on the rock salt for 45 minutes. Cool, peel then slice with a mandoline. To serve, arrange the beetroot layers on a plate. Lay the peeled orange segments on top and dot with crumbled goat's cheese, hazelnuts and a sprinkle of extra rock salt. No matter how you slice it, this hits the spot both nutritionally and visually – so we'll permit cameras for this one.

WILD CARBS

Extend your roster of top-class carbs with these equally unsung nutritional powerhouses

PUMPKIN SEEDS

Filled with antioxidants such as carotenoids and vitamin E, a regular handful of pepitas will curb inflammation to protect your heart.

PEANUTS

The mighty combination of peanut butter and jam serves up a hefty dose of resveratrol and quercetin, which will stop fat cells in their tracks.

KIDNEY BEANS

A one-stop macro source, 100g of kidney beans contain 20g of protein and 15g of fibre, along with an energising 60g of carbohydrates.



FLU-FIGHTING HONEY FENNEL WITH ORANGE

SERVES 2

- Fennel, 2, quartered
- Rapeseed oil, 1tbsp
- Honey, 2tbsp
- Butter, 1tbsp
- An orange, quartered

METHOD

Start by preheating your oven to 200°C. Add the rapeseed oil to a cast-iron pan and heat on high. Add the fennel and drizzle with the honey and butter. Then transfer the pan to the oven and roast for five minutes. The heat will caramelise the honey and butter. Remove and mix with the orange segments to serve up a tasty protective armour against winter bugs.



TAKE HEART SALT-BAKED CELERIAC AND KALE

SERVES 4

- Celeriac, 2
- Salt, 250g
- Thyme leaves, 20g
- Plain flour, 400g
- Egg whites, 100g
- Water, 150ml
- Chestnut mushrooms, 100g
- Kale, 150g
- Celery leaves, 10g
- Rapeseed oil, 40g

METHOD

Mix the salt, thyme, flour, egg whites and water to form a dough. Scrub the celeriac; cover one with the salt dough and bake at 200°C for 45 minutes. Break the crust and leave to cool. Dice the other celeriac, simmer until soft, then purée. Fry the mushrooms and boil the kale. Blend together the celery leaves and oil. Quarter the celeriac and place in the centre of the plate, with the purée, mushrooms and kale.



HAVE A PLAN, MAN

A little mental labour is the sexiest thing a man can do, reckons Lauren Larson. Here's why being 'amenable' is overrated

Every now and then, someone asks you a question that causes your eye to twitch, your limbs to lock and your loins to crawl up into your body. "Do you know how fast you were going just now?" is one of those questions. "Do you have a second to chat?" is another one.

But there's one question that hardens my heart to the question asker forever: "When do I get to see you again?" This past summer, I went out with a guy I really liked. On the first date, we went for drinks. The day after, he texted me: "When do I get to see you again?" The question wasn't a rage trigger for me yet; I thought it was sweet that he was direct about his interest.

I told him I was free the following Tuesday, and we made dinner plans. The day after that, he texted me again: "When do I get to see you again?" The eye twitch began. I told him my weekend was wide open. "Great," he said, "let's do something."

I'm a child of *The Bachelor* franchise, and as such I love a good activity date. I've gone on a lot of drinks dates in my time, and it's always refreshing to do something different. I don't need to bungee jump on a beach in Singapore, à la *The Bachelor*, but it's nice to have an interesting answer when my friends ask what we did. I would have done literally any "something" my date had suggested, short of heroin.

The thrill of the activity date does not lie in doing the activity; most activity dates are kind of lame. The thrill of the activity date is having someone plan something for you. Some men know this intuitively. Those men are, invariably, happily dating or married to women who are way out of their league.

My date didn't suggest a

“something”. He wanted all the benefits of seeing me without having to do any of the work to plan it. He was happy to lead the charge on timing, the easiest part of date planning, but he wasn’t eager to take on any of the actual stress of planning. We would be locked in a passive battle, each of us trying to foist the burden of planning on to the other, until one of us died. I texted him back with some things I like to do: museums, comedy clubs, zoos, saunas. I felt like a maths teacher trying to guide a student to an obvious answer – “Does two plus two equal four, 40 or 400?” – except there was no wrong answer.

Finally I cracked. I suggested we go see *Once Upon a Time... in Hollywood* and get some dinner. But I’d had it: the next day, when he asked me again when he would “get to see” me, I said I had a busy week ahead.

I don’t think I would have spurned him so coolly if I hadn’t recently dated a man who, bless his heart, could not plan. When I’d ask him to pick a restaurant, he’d say, “But you always pick such great spots”. He said this with the conniving innocence of someone saying, “Whenever I help with the dishes, I break one.” Good relationships require planning even when you’re in the Netflix-on-the-couch-with-Thai-food stage, and I felt like the burden was always on me. I imagined myself planning the rest of our relationship, then our wedding, then the minutiae of our kids’ days. I imagined myself in 20 years snapping and whacking him in the mouth.

SHOULDER THE LOAD

These days, we (women, especially when we’re stressed) talk a lot about “mental labour”, the invisible work that happens in a relationship. The term made one of its earliest appearances in a 1996 paper from Susan Walzer in the journal *Social Problems* – coincidentally the title of my memoir. Walzer explored how the mental labour of childcare was divided between mothers and fathers. She divided that load into three categories: worrying, processing information and managing the division of labour.

Walzer described how women are socially programmed to worry about their babies, even feeling like bad mothers when they’re not worrying. Men are not worriers and don’t feel that their lack of worrying reflects on them as parents. Women, in turn,

“THE FLIP SIDE IS THAT BY PLANNING A DATE, A MAN SETS HIMSELF APART IMMEDIATELY”

might worry more because they know the men aren’t worrying. Women also tended to do more research into what makes a parent good or bad – that’s the “processing information” part. And mothers spent more time “managing the division of labour”, meaning they spent more time trying to get their babies’ fathers to take a more active role in parenting. Women were the logistics captains of the family.

It’s kind of understandable, then, that a lot of the men I’m dating now – men who were being raised in 1996 – have an aversion to planning. Nobody taught them how to do it. There’s really only one type of occasion when men do, stereotypically, have to take over planning from women: school-formal proposals and marriage proposals. Many guys panic and turn to the nearest big screen.

For fathers, the message of Walzer’s paper is clear: don’t be the dad who’s got everything figured out. Be the dad who’s freaking out because one kid has soccer at 3:15 and one kid has piano an hour away at 3:20.

For husbands, sharing mental labour in the relationship is a little less straightforward. It might mean making sure you’re sharing in household tasks or taking charge of making travel plans for the holidays.

For those of us nibbling from the fine charcuterie of the meat market (dating): our date is our baby. Our objective is to date someone who captained the First XV, excels in STEM fields, wins a Eureka and cuddles us post-retirement. I’m happy to take on planning sometimes – I really do pick great restaurants – but sometimes I want to hand over the reins. I don’t want to stress about whether we’ll have enough time to get from the bar to the movie (worrying). I don’t want to spend my day reading up on the best new saké bars (processing information). I don’t want to stress about whether you’ve stressed about whether we’ll have enough time to get from the bar to the movie or whether you’ve thoroughly

researched the best new saké bars (managing the division of labour).

The flip side of my grievances is that by planning a date, a man sets himself apart immediately. Even if I’m iffy on a guy after a first date, if he texts me with a plan (“We can meet at the 5:30 screening of *The Farewell*, then walk to a good Ethiopian place nearby”), he’s getting a second date. The same goes for boyfriends and husbands: most malfeasances can be brushed away by a well-planned evening, or even just an earnest attempt at a well-planned evening.

If “When do I get to see you again?” is one of the most stressful phrases in a relationship, then “I made a reservation” may be the sexiest. ■

HOW TO PICK A DATE RESTAURANT

Six considerations to minimise stress (hers) and maximise brownie points (yours)



Convenience

If you’re meeting after work, pick a place she can get to easily from her office. If you’re meeting on a weekend, pick somewhere you can both get to easily.



Noise level

People noise is fine – a crowded restaurant suggests that you chose a popular spot – but loud music is not. You want bustling, not bumping.



Lighting

The restaurant doesn’t have to be candlelit, but the lighting shouldn’t be fluorescent. Fluorescent is the opposite of sexy.



Reservations

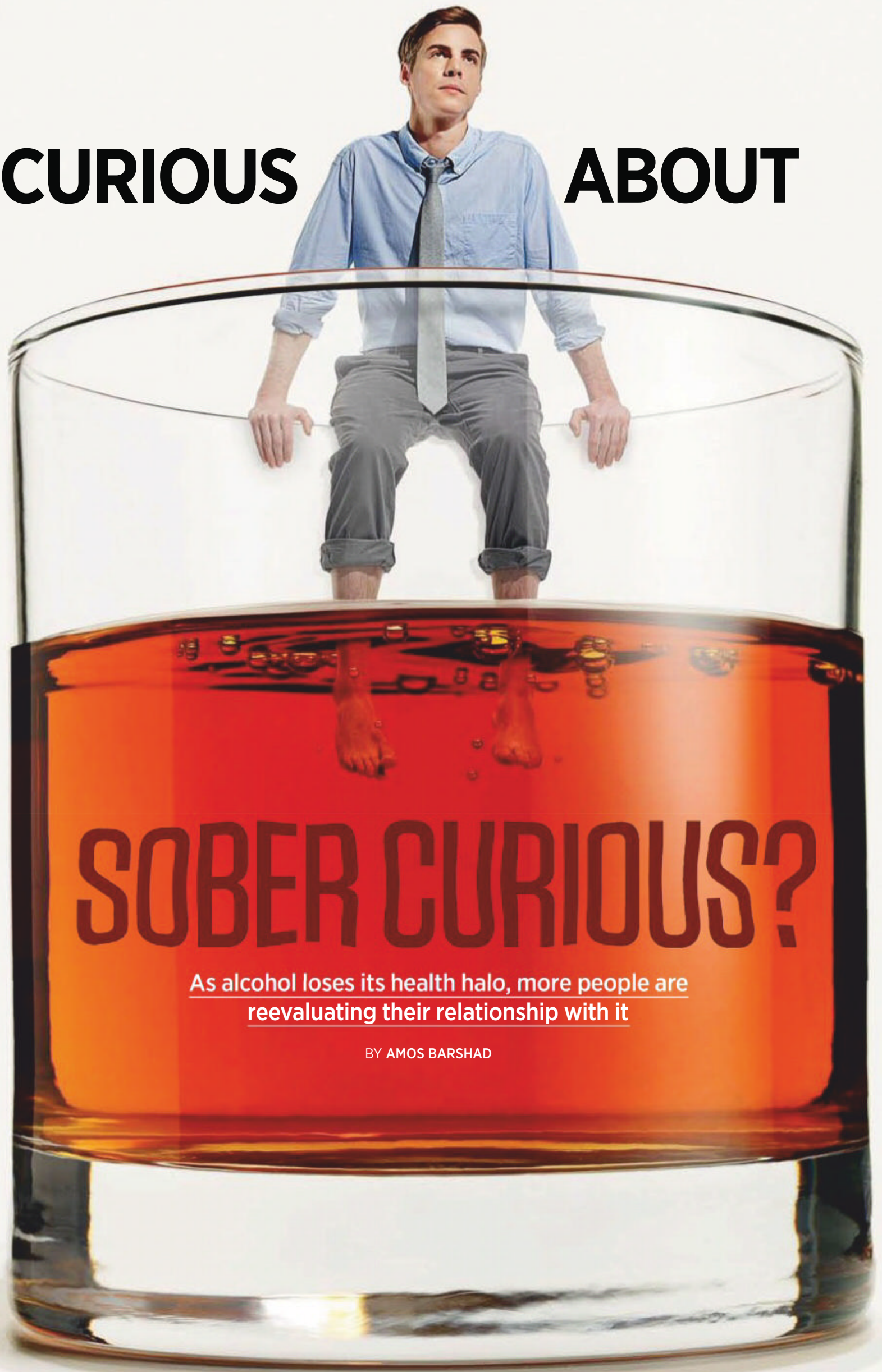
Make one for a reasonable time; if the only available reservation is at 4:45pm, find a different spot.



Food

Look for a good mix of light “precoital” fare and heavy “I’m going to need to lie down and not move for five hours after this burger” fare.

CURIOUS ABOUT



SOBER CURIOUS?

As alcohol loses its health halo, more people are reevaluating their relationship with it

BY AMOS BARSHAD

THE FIRST TIME I remember hearing about the concept of not drinking in July, I was with my basketball mates after a pick-up game in an area of my home city known for its night-life. This was a winter evening more than a decade ago, over a table of chicken sandwiches. One guy, who worked in commodities, was explaining to a group of us how, after the excesses he tends to fall prey to during the colder months, he liked to take a month off drinking. To detox. To refresh. To healthify. It felt like a strange secret from a better, more progressive place – particularly coming out in this post-game huddle. That night, the sweaty dude was just full of rarefied wisdom. And I was curious.

Nowadays, the concept of a sober July doesn't feel so exotic. In fact, as known by its pop-lexicon title, "Dry July", it's practically a brand. According to the Dry July Foundation, in 2019 more than 43,000 people signed up to go grog-free. And, chances are, double or even triple that number would have sworn off the drink unofficially.

I have what I consider to be a pretty good relationship with drinking. Plainly, I'm a fan. I wasn't a young drinking prodigy. It was when I moved to a big city, at 21, that I fell in love with bars and the things that can happen in them. I met some of my best friends that year. I also puked more that year, quite possibly, than in the rest of my life combined. Over time, I've calibrated my intake choices and minorly dabbled in drugs, from gateway to stronger stuff. It's all brought me back to the same initial conclusion: in drinking, I have all the vice I ever need.

And yet I've been swept up, too: I've attempted Dry July three years running. Meanwhile, beyond episodic fads, sobriety has morphed into a lifestyle, the sober curious, a term popularised by the author/podcaster Ruby Warrington via her 2018 book of the same name. These people don't just do Dry July – they

"THE STUDY'S CONCLUSION CONTRADICTED YEARS OF PRIOR RESEARCH AND DECLARED, DRAMATICALLY, THAT THERE IS NO SAFE LEVEL OF DRINKING"

hang out at sober bars, download sobriety podcasts and apps, and consume content from self-branded sober gurus.

"I feel like alcohol is the new cigarettes," says Warrington. "Smoking was completely socially acceptable 30 years ago. Fast-forward a couple of decades and people will drink and use alcohol much differently."

As Dry July has boomed and cross-pollinated into sober curious, it's also become divisive. If you have partaken, you know. Some people get it. But turn down a drink during the month of July and someone will declare, as if they've caught you: "You're doing Dry July?" Know this: you have to be ready – aesthetically, morally, spiritually – to defend your decision.

To me, that makes total sense. The rapid permeation of the sober-curious wave has given it a slight tinge of mass psychosis. We're talking about tens of thousands of people, largely people who don't believe they have a drinking problem, giving up the sauce. Why would anyone willingly stop drinking?

Well, okay: you stop drinking because it is, almost surely, not all that great for you. In 2018, the *Lancet* published what it called "the most comprehensive estimate of the global burden of alcohol use to date". Its widely publicised conclusion contradicted years of prior research and general common wisdom and declared, dramatically, that, actually, there is no safe level of drinking. That even one drink a day correlates to an increased chance of

health problems. And that more drinking correlates to, yes, even more problems.

SOBERING THOUGHT

While some criticised the study's observational tactics and other research points to the potential benefits of moderate alcohol intake, its conclusion resonated widely. Perhaps that's because sobriety is attaining an increased cultural cachet. Sober curious is part of a more general move to open up decision-making trees in various aspects of modern life. People used to be either something or not that thing. But you can temporarily quit meat, or only do gluten when you're partying. It's not just all-or-nothing. Nowadays there are all sorts of gradients. There are so many reasons to choose sober-ish.

To learn more, I belly up to a bar where the food is vegan and the drinks are non-alcoholic. In the US, sober bars like this are popping up across the country. There's also an app, *Loosid*, to help you find like-minded sober people.

Zoey Henderson, head of ops at Redemption in London, tells me about how her cocktail menu has moved away from "homemade kombucha, shrubs, tinctures and essences" and toward an influx of nonalcoholic "plant spirits" and bottle brands that replicate gin and rum flavours in cocktails that are a combination of "mixology and alchemy."

The Redemption bartenders, Henderson explains, are using "older recipes and herbal tonics that give you all those wonderful,

positive reinforcements that you look for in a drink. They make you feel a bit buzzy. They make you want to dance." She specifically recommends Redemption's hibiscus sour, "a powerful botanical elixir". And as for what a night out at Redemption is like, it's "exactly the same" as a social outing with alcohol, Henderson says, "except the toilets stay cleaner, nobody gets rowdy, glassware is smashed a lot less – all the positives; none of the negatives!"

Another group of people sliding into sobriety are those on restrictive eating plans. Well-known lifestyle diets like keto and Whole30 famously restrict or eliminate your alcohol choices. I have two very smart scientist friends: Rachel, who is a physician and scientist, and Greg, a scientist at a well-known cancer institute. Both are paleo.

"I use paleo more as a framework for a low-glycemic-index diet, which is the diet that has the most data behind it as being good for overall health," Rachel explains. "I do still drink, but being on a paleo/low-glycemic-index diet has made me more conscious in general about what I take in and how I feel after eating/drinking things."

For Greg, paleo helps him maintain "an overall healthy lifestyle" and "control in the amount of alcohol I consume." And even when drinking, he stays paleo via grape-based Ciroc. "Thank God," he says, "for Diddy."

While Greg gets loose on grape vodka, many more are relying on a buzz from a different >

botanical source, popularised by West Coast rappers like Snoop Dogg. Though the legalisation of marijuana in parts of the US has not impacted the sales of spirits, it has illuminated a spectrum of usage that ranges from “cross-fading” (spirits and weed) to “Cali-sober” (weed only). Writer Katie Heaney recently chronicled her Cali-sober journey, detailing how smoking marijuana has helped take the edge off cutting back on alcohol. As Heaney told me, “I don’t necessarily relate to the more wellness-y aspects of sober curiosity. I think it’s great if anyone wants to drink less. But I think that’s a decision most people have to come to on their own, for their own reasons. For some people, having a like-minded community might really help with that, but it’s just not my thing”.

However, data on overall alcohol consumption for the past several years does reveal year-on-year declines, so people are drinking less, especially millennials. Annie Grace, another author/influencer/podcaster, credits social media for this trend and says young people “don’t want to be embarrassed on a platform that lives forever. I certainly am glad there was no photographic record of what I did in my early 20s”.

It’s not just about embarrassment, though. As the *New York Times* put it in a recent sober-curious story: “Beyond the health risks, the booze that flows freely at fraternity parties or holiday mixers has started to look to some women like a tool of oppression in the age of radical consent”. Grace adds another factor in the decision-making

process of millennials and Gen-Zers: “Their experience with their own parents drinking. It seems that they feel alcohol is their parents’ drug”.

Instead, the kids want to get high on . . . wellness?! You know, yoga, meditation, adult colouring books, wheatgrass shots, CBD everything – and so much more. “Once a person begins the journey into health and wellness, alcohol often sticks out as a sore thumb,” says Grace.

BYE BYE BOOZE

I personally didn’t dip a toe into the sober-curious pool, via Dry July, because of sober bars, sober gurus, diet, weed or youth. It wasn’t thanks to the sweaty hoops player, either, but through the wisdom of someone even more impressive: my girlfriend.

If I were ever to try it, trying it with her seemed like the most palatable option. I thought cutting out one twelfth of my yearly alcohol intake seemed like a pretty good idea. I’d save money, lose weight, focus better, blah blah blah. I succeeded, with pluck and guile, in my first attempt. I found that all the clichés were true. I did want to socialise less. I did want to eat more ice cream. I also found out that, after the first week or so, it got easier. That once I got even a little bit of a head of sober steam, the booze cravings weren’t crowding my brain. I slept better! I also felt, slightly, like I was living in stasis.

There are many reasons to stop drinking, either temporarily or altogether. For me, the reason is this: I need to check with myself that, while I love drinking, I do not *need* it. And not to get carried away here, but if you’re



“ONCE I GOT A HEAD OF SOBER STEAM, THE BOOZE CRAVINGS WEREN’T CROWDING MY BRAIN”

not questioning everything in 2020, as the world tilts on so many axes, maybe you’re not thinking hard enough. We should be analysing our relationships with our coworkers, our romantic partners, our families, our best friends. We should be thinking about our booze.

We can do that in July. Or we can do it whenever. And if it’s July and we’re not feeling good

about our fast, we can just – stop! Years ago, I was with a mate at breakfast, contemplating getting a doughnut. I hemmed and hawed and muttered to myself how it was “bad for me”. He looked at me, pointed to his brain and said something I’ve never forgotten: “It’s good for the mental, though”.

Yes, even one drink is bad for you. But even one drink can be damn good for the mental. ■



CRUSH IT

Use these tips to thrive whether you’re doing Dry July or leaning into sober curious



If alcohol helps you decompress after work, do another activity that helps you relax. It could be a short workout or committing to a daily stroll. Or something more explicitly stress-busting like meditating or writing down whatever is on your mind, says psychiatrist Drew Ramsey.



If you enjoy the rituals of drinking, plan your alcohol-free stand-ins at home and out. Think about what you like most about your go-to drink and give yourself alcohol-free options, whether it’s a nonalcoholic beer, mocktail or kombucha, advises Jenna Hollenstein, author of *Drinking to Distraction*.



If alcohol is your social lubricant, you may need professional treatment. Talk therapy is a proven way to deal with social anxiety, says Ramsey. Or talk to a doctor about meds. Alcohol calms by enhancing the same neurotransmitter effects as Xanax.

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*Chen YJ, Shimizu Bassi G, Yang YQ, Classic Chinese Acupuncture versus Different Types of Control Groups for the Treatment of Chronic Pain: Review of Randomized Controlled Trials (2000-2018). Evid Based Complement Alternat Med. 2019 Dec 4;2019:6283912. doi: 10.1155/2019/6283912



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The Stress-Free Guide to

SPECIAL OCCASION SEX

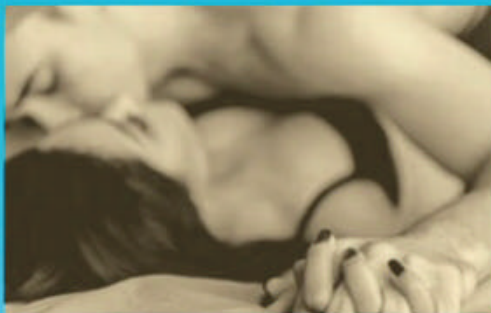
Should you make time for sex on birthdays, anniversaries and holidays? Yes. Should it be stressful? Absolutely not

BY JULIE VADNAL // PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFFREY WESTBROOK

PLANNING A SEXATHON on an anniversary or a birthday may seem cliché—“Dick in a Box” came out, what, more than a decade ago? But that just means you have to be more creative, because a memorable sex session makes for one of the best gifts of all.

“Especially in long-term relationships, things can get really monotonous, and having sex around special occasions spices things up,” says sex therapist Kristie Overstreet. “And there can be a really big payoff.” As in, stronger orgasms and increased bonding.

But amping up your game for a special occasion can also add pressure. How far do you have to go – in terms of adventurousness and budget – to give her an unforgettable experience? Relax. You don’t need to hire a skywriter to make her swoon. Oftentimes, just expending a little more effort can do the trick. “What people will remember most is the time and energy their partner put in,” says psychologist Seth Meyers, eHarmony’s relationship expert. Use these four strategies to make special-occasion sex even more special.



CREATE AN IG FILTER IRL

We're not saying you need to light more candles than the Vatican or scatter rose petals everywhere. But there are a few clever ways to create a mood without killing it – and yes, one of them involves candlelight. Candlelight is a real-life Instagram filter, and who doesn't want that when they're naked? Instead of buying a 50-pack of tea lights from Aldi, which can be a fire hazard, invest in one statement candle. It's a gift and a scene-setter all in one.

Besides buying candles, Melissa, 26, a publicist, makes sure she and her partner can refuel and rehydrate after a special-occasion romp. Once, when they hadn't seen each other for a while, she says she stocked the room "with post-coitus snacks – chocolates and flavoured seltzers are my go-to – so we wouldn't have to leave our island of sheets for hours."

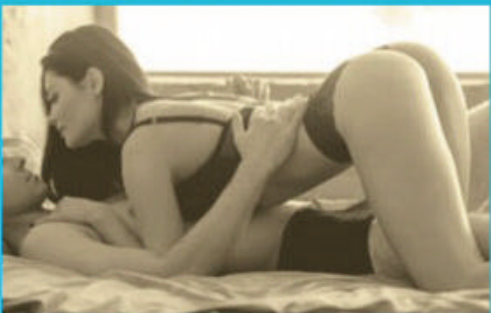


SLOW (WAY, WAY) DOWN

We know you want to make her come – and that's great! – but challenge yourself to go slow during foreplay. "Make an extra effort to spend time kissing, touching, nuzzling, fondling without the express goal of the 'ASAP orgasm' or even penetration," Meyers says. The less she feels pressured to climax, the more she'll be able to enjoy herself, which ultimately makes a big O more likely.

On a partner's birthday, Andrew, 28, a writer, decided to give her an erotic massage. "It started with just a regular massage, and when she was relaxed, I slowly moved into sexually pleasuring her," he says. "By the time we actually had sex, it was incredible." Relationship expert Sadie Allison suggests buying a bottle of massage oil and taking your sweet time.

"Do some gentle stroking while making it a point to touch every inch of skin on her body, from behind her ears to under her arms, all the way down to the bottom of her feet," Allison says.



PLAY WITH POSITIONING

Hopefully you know the surefire ways to please your partner, especially if you've been together since before butt motorboating became a thing. But a birthday or an anniversary is a chance to try a new position that skews from your usual moves.

That doesn't mean you need to install a hanging sex swing. It can be as simple as adding this twist to missionary, suggests Allison: get in position for regulation missionary, but scoot her booty to the edge of the bed so that you're standing. Though it's a slight change, it makes a big difference in your stamina (thrusting while standing is easier than while kneeling) and gives you both super-deep stimulation.

Or change up your scenery. "For my birthday, my boyfriend took us to a spa for a couple's massage, but they gave you an hour in a giant tub prior to the massage," says Jess, 33, a photo producer.

"It was clearly for sex, so yes, we had sex. It was amazing, and the feeling that we might get caught made it extra hot."



MAKE AN X-RATED TOY STORY

Whether or not you're already using toys as part of your regularly scheduled sexing, introducing a new one that stimulates you both will up the ante.

That's what Melissa and her partner tried to do on their first Christmas together, when he gifted her a "massive" butt plug. "It was supposed to be a very romantic evening of us exploring anal training – something we were both really turned on by – but because he got the wrong size, it was a really awkward back-and-forth with lots of lube everywhere before we finally admitted defeat," she says. Eventually, they switched to a normal-sized plug – with the help of cookies-and-cream flavoured lube. ■

PARTY SUPPLIES

These buys make special-occasion sex even more fun for everyone involved



► **MAN CANDLE**
She'll like Urban Apothecary's Smoked Leather. \$29; adorebeauty.com.au



► **DUSK DELIGHT CANDLE**
Freshen up the bedroom with something fruity: Acai & Berries. \$30; dusk.com.au



► **KISSABLE BODY OIL**
Tease her with Dona Kissable Massage Oil. \$16; adulttoymegatore.com.au



► **RING OF FIRE**
Up the heat with the 50 Shades Darker Ring. \$60; lovehoney.com.au



► **DIFFERENT VIBE**
The Dame-Fin is a tool like no other. \$110; nourishedlife.com.au



► **WE-VIBE UNITE 2**
It's clitoral and G-spot stimulation all in one toy. \$130; lovehoney.com.au

Our Kind of Girl

ASHLEY JOI

Let this weapon of a trainer with big ideas and a flair for psychology guide you towards a better life



BY SCOTT HENDERSON

"I've never understood: what is a 'female workout'?" It's a fair question from psychologist-turned-model-turned-trainer Ashley Joi. We're kicking back under the warm winter Californian sun after a brutal workout, and Joi is contemplating the current state of fitness. "Why do we separate the two?" In raising the point, Joi is identifying an oft-overlooked flaw in many approaches to training, perhaps a carry-over from wider society. It's something she has set about changing – just one of the many changes Joi wants to see in the world. And given her new platform as part of Chris Hemsworth's super-squad of trainers on *Centr*, she's on track to reshape a whole lot more than just your body.



The World According to Ashley Joi

IF IT SPARKS JOI...

Not since William Wordsmith has there been a more fitting aptonym than Ashley Joi. *MH* caught up with the Southern Californian on her home turf, and she could not have been more, well, joyous. “Joy is my middle name. I have always wanted to be known as ‘Ashley Joy,’” she explains between sips of her post-workout smoothie. “When I graduated college, social media was consistent in everyone’s life. So I made everything ‘Ashley Joi’. Changed the ‘y’ to an ‘i’. And made a persona in a sense. I made the person that I always felt that I was on the inside, that I wanted people to see me as.”

The move proved to be a stroke of genius in personal branding, with Joi’s infectious personality the catalyst for her rise to the top of the Californian fitness community within six years. But despite the abundance of sunny smiles and positive affirmations, don’t expect a fluffy workout under her guidance. While she believes there’s a place for frivolity, that place is *not* the gym. “I’m not asking you to do what I can do,” says Joi, “I’m asking you to give me the best of yourself – and I’m going to be there to push you past that point.”

IN YOUR HEAD

Joi’s journey to super-trainer began with a psychology degree from the University of Rhode Island. “I originally wanted to be a therapist, a counsellor. Save-the-world type thing. I worked at an alcohol and drug rehab centre. I’ve worked with neglected children, autistic children, the emotionally disturbed.” Joi credits these tough years with helping her to understand and connect with her clients. “They’ve basically chosen me to be that [caring] person, to see them at their weakest point and trust me to get them to another point.”

While Joi is firmly on the fitness train now, if she has her way you might be seeing her from the therapist’s couch again soon, in a hybrid existence combining her past and present. “I

still want to go back and get either my Master’s in sports psychology or just be a therapist,” she tells *MH* as LAPD choppers circle overhead. “I have this vision of being in my home and having a gym that opens up to the ocean. I would have my clients come over and we would train. We would walk out to the beach, there’d be two chairs, and we would end with a therapy session.”

JOI TRIBE

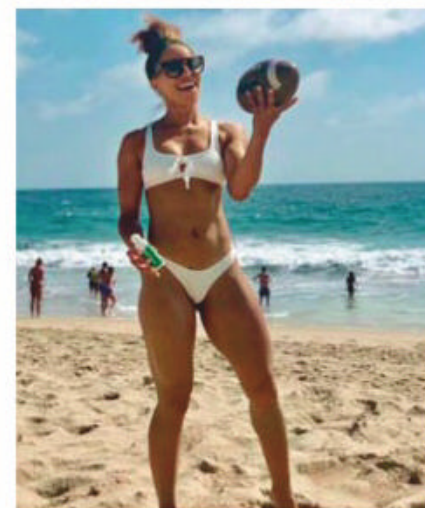
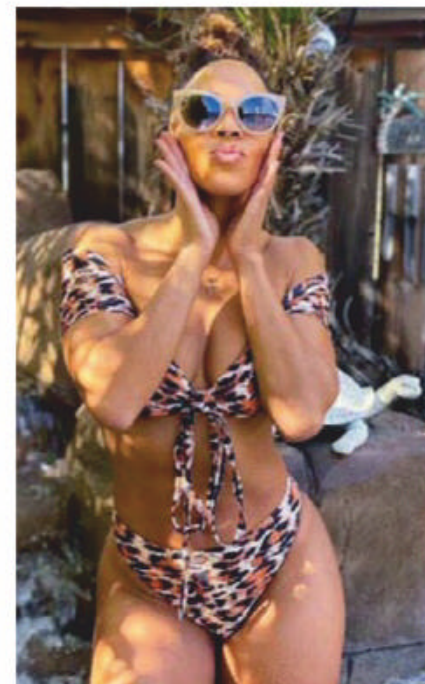
Whether it be a partner, colleague or friend, Joi has a few prerequisites for those wishing to join her self-proclaimed ‘Joi Tribe’ – and they boil down to appreciation and respect. “If I didn’t feel heard or appreciated or respected, fuck it, I’m not going back.” And despite calling LA home, don’t expect her to indulge your theatrics. “I don’t like drama, so I’m not a gossip,” she says.

Joi’s tribe is growing fast, thanks in part to her new-found platform with *Centr*. But success hasn’t always come easily. “Being a woman of colour, you have to fight a little bit harder for yourself and what you stand for, and know there’s only one spot for you,” she says. “You’re up against every shade of brown as a woman of colour. It doesn’t matter if it’s Hispanic, Latino, anything.” Despite the ongoing battle, her trademark optimism is never far from the surface, and she brushes off the reality she’s just described with a shrug. “It’s just the way the world is right now. You only get one shot. So bring it all. Be yourself.”

FRIENDS WITH BENEFITS

Relocating to LA and building an empire has afforded Joi access to a variety of personnel rarely accessible to personal trainers. She now counts a publicist and make-up artist as permanent fixtures of her team. “The people around me, we’re all talented – we just haven’t made it yet,” says Joi. “But we can make it if we work together.”

It was only recently Joi realised she



INSTAGRAM @ASHLEYJOI

shouldn’t be afraid of asking for help. In fact, she should embrace it. As a result, she now has a personal advisory board that would make any aspiring Hollywood starlet envious. She counts former *US Biggest Loser* trainer Jillian Michaels, Hollywood trainer Jeanette Jenkins and comedian Damon Wayans as mentors.

In fact, it was Wayans who initially highlighted to Joi the importance of career mentors. “You need a mentor or people to hold you accountable,” Joi remembers Wayans saying. “You can’t just walk through life thinking you’ve got it.” After outlining her goals to Wayans in the same conversation, the comic heavyweight delivered advice that has underpinned her approach to life ever since. “He told me not to care about what other people are telling you to do. He said, ‘Fuck what people are saying you should do. You need to do what you want to do.’” The result for Ashley? A whole lot of Joi. ■

UNLOCKING THE SALES GAME

Getting To The Truth

As the world's #1 authority on trust-based selling and the CEO and founder of Unlock The Sales Game, Ari Galper is disrupting the sales industry and helping business leaders change their sales approach to focus on trust, not just the sale.

Ari Galper, the founder of the Trust-Based Selling field, has developed a revolutionary sales approach based on trust, integrity and getting-to-the-truth with potential clients – as outlined in his new best-selling book *Unlock The Sales Game*, now available on Amazon.

He believes that many businesses are still selling the traditional way and have not upgraded their skills and mindset in years. As a result, they are losing sales opportunities every month because they still operate under old assumptions like: 1. The sale is lost at the end of the process, *(it's now lost at the beginning)* 2. Selling is a numbers game *(it's no longer a numbers game, it's about how much trust you create in your initial conversations)* 3. Chasing potential clients is an acceptable part of the process, *(if you're chasing, you're not getting to the truth)*.

"In this day and age, potential clients are so sensitive to even the most subtle pressure, the moment they sense you are pursuing them, they put up their guard and feel it's their right to not tell you the truth of where they stand," he explains. "My unique approach is to build deep trust with potential clients, not after the sale, but before the sale, so you can decide if they are a fit with you, not the other way around."

When Ari was managing a sales team at a software company years ago, he had a conference call that completely changed his sales mindset forever. The potential client on the call seemed genuine in their interest for the solution he was offering, thanked him for his time and said they'd get back to him. When they thought he had hung up from the conference call, after he pushed the "mute" button by mistake, instead of the "off" button, he heard them say, "keep stringing him along for more information and let's look around for a cheaper solution."

"Ouch...is an understatement of how I felt... it was the first time I realized I was being lied to in the sales game," Ari says. "That deeply disturbing moment is what caused me to create the Trust-Based Selling movement and what I call the Unlock The Sales Game Mindset, to break away from the conventional



view that making the sale is the initial goal. Turns out, letting go of the end goal of the sale, and focusing on creating deep trust to get to the truth, is *10 times more profitable than chasing non-buyers.*"

This is a hard pill to swallow for most businesses still tied to their old sales beliefs from the past. Many businesses are still using outdated sales models and don't want to admit how many sales opportunities they are losing every month because of their traditional beliefs of what selling is supposed to be.

"For example, I teach my consulting clients to never use the word 'follow-up', either over the phone or through email. Follow-up is an old sales word that when said to a potential client, makes them feel all you care about is your end goal and not their goal," he says. Ari invented his own authentic and natural languaging (not formulaic scripts) based on trust, called Trust-Based Languaging. All of his clients have replaced the word "follow-up" with the word "feedback" and have reported immediate success with getting to the truth with

potential clients. He believes that companies who live or die by new sales opportunities, are focusing on the wrong goals.

"Most companies focus only on the sales they are making, which is usually around 5% – 20% of their total opportunities. They have no idea how to solve the problem of the other 80% – 95% of their sales opportunities they are losing," says Ari.

Ari notes that the entire sales industry is avoiding focusing on the truth: it's not about more leads, it's about converting a much higher percentage of the opportunities that you are currently chasing.

That shift in thinking, has made Ari a contrarian in the sales industry and a lone voice in an industry that has been conditioned to de-humanise the sales process and treat potential sales targets as "prospects" and not human beings.

Ari says, "Those businesses who are open to making the shift to Trust-Based Selling will succeed long term, those who don't, will ultimately become commoditised."

If you'd like a free copy of Ari's new book *Unlock The Sales Game* (along with a free video series with examples of Ari's approach), for a limited time, visit www.UnlockTheSalesGame.com



Better Listening Through Science

Tuning in isn't just for dropping out. Research shows that your soundtrack can make you more creative, productive and non-grumpy. Find out what to play at what time of day to become ultra-you

BY ELIZABETH BACHARACH // ILLUSTRATION BY SARAH LEITUALA

7AM RISE RIGHT Choose gentle, upbeat tunes like “Coming Home” by Leon Bridges and “Way to You” by Brandi Carlile that won’t startle you first thing. Not only are earsplitting sounds a bad way to start the day, but they can affect your breakfast choices. A loud environment ratchets up your stress level, which may lead you to reach for high-kilojoule foods.

8AM WIN YOUR WORKOUT Ever try to bench 100kg while rocking out to “I’m Yours” by Jason Mraz? Us neither. Studies show that faster, more intense hits like “Welcome to the Jungle” by Guns N’ Roses or “People” by The 1975 can boost strength, endurance and efficiency when lifting and HIIT-ing.

10AM SWITCH YOUR MUSIC, POWER YOUR BRAIN

Music (be it Mozart or Eminem) can keep you energised when you have mindless tasks to complete. When it’s creativity you’re after, make an effort to go wide: listen to unfamiliar songs and shuffle through a variety of genres. These can help you think outside the box, says Indre Viskontas, author of *How Music Can Make You Better*.

12PM REBOOT WITH VOCALS

Lunch is the right time to slow down and reset. Turn on some softer, slower vocal tracks – Sam Smith ballads could be the ticket – to calm your heart rate and allow yourself to be more mindful and in the moment.

6PM RECOVER EN ROUTE

Use your commute to decompress with instrumental numbers à la Miles Davis (or anything mellow, Viskontas says). You might want to go with a chorus: a study in *PLOS One* found that listening to soothing choral music lowered stress markers in the body faster than nature sounds or no music. Pro tip: avoid boredom and frustration in an already irritating train or traffic situation by changing up your tracklist regularly. To save you some searching, just use our recent adds: “Cover My Tracks” by Ruston Kelly and “Walking on a String” by Matt Berninger and Phoebe Bridgers.

10PM POWER DOWN Before you sleep, press play on something more

Zen, like Brian Eno or yoga music. (Spotify has hours and hours of that genre to choose from.) The tempo is fine-tuned to promote restfulness, and you won’t get distracted trying to follow lyrics.

WEEKEND CHASE AWAY THE DREADED SUNDAY SCARIES

The antidote to your emotional (and possibly physical) hangover at the end of the weekend: reach back in time to ’80s Billy Joel or Fleetwood Mac. The potent mix of accessible, up-tempo nostalgia jams and heartsick ballads helps soothe Sunday-night melancholy. When the artist you’re listening to expresses what you’re feeling at that moment, says Viskontas, you get a hit of oxytocin, a feel-good hormone, and you lower the stress hormone cortisol. ■

JUNK OR SCIENCE?

CAN YOU READ ME NOW?

An eyesight-boosting app that helps fighter-jet pilots see better and may work as well as Lasik? Maybe



SEVERAL YEARS AGO, while I was doing final sweeps through a book I'd just written, I began to notice that my eyes were having a hard time speeding through the manuscript. That didn't really bother me, because the protagonist, a big-wave surfer named Greg Long, had such bad eyesight that he had trouble spotting giant waves on the horizon, and my situation wasn't anywhere near that. Still, this was problematic. I'd always been a speedy reader who didn't sweat small fonts, and I'd never needed glasses for navigating tricky terrain while mountain biking or skateboarding. Yet one night, there I was, barely into my 50s, highlighting typos with a pair of 1.5x readers draped across my nose. I wondered, is this my future?

What was happening to me – and will eventually happen to you, your younger brother and Tom Brady – is called presbyopia. You don't notice this condition initially, but presbyopia can start as early as age 30. Every five years after that, you'll lose the ability to focus on one more line on the eye doctor's letter chart. By 40, most of us will start noticing it, squinting here, moving the iPhone a little further away from the face there, whether or not you've ever worn glasses. And right around the big 5-0, nearly all of us are afflicted.

Because I've never been hindered by a need to keep track of eyeglasses but need to do a lot of reading for work, I dreamed of some outside-the-box solution rather than glasses or contact lenses. The first thing I learned is that presbyopia is correctable with surgery – monovision Lasik, corneal implants or lens-replacement surgery – but I'm leery of having laser beams or scalpels etch my corneas.

Then one night while Googling the condition, I was led to an app called GlassesOff. It promises to help you read type 50 per cent smaller than you can right now and perhaps improve your reading speed significantly. There was even research indicating that it could help you respond a few milliseconds faster to, say, a cricket ball flying at you, by improving a brain activity called visual processing.

GlassesOff asks you to spend less than 15 minutes three times a week reacting by touch screen to tiny, blurry striped balls called Gabor patches as they flash across a featureless grey background. Early on, the patches are larger, slower and better defined. As you progress, they appear and disappear more rapidly, eventually becoming mere ghostly dots that can

WORDS BY CHRIS DIXON

be incredibly hard to see. And that's the point.

The very idea that this might be effective seemed suspicious, since nobody I knew who needed to wear reading glasses was talking about this \$13-a-month app. And it seems even more far-fetched when you take biology into account. Presbyopia occurs when your eye's flexible lens – which is the shape and size of a soft Skittle – isn't so flexible anymore. To focus up close, you contract the muscles that hold the lens in place. As you age, that Skittle hardens. You compensate by squinting. But, in time, not even that helps.

Presbyopia is a game of dominoes, and your lens is only the first to fall. The next is neurological: that blurring of everything you should be seeing hampers your ability to discern contrast and interferes with how smoothly your neurons stream visual data to your brain. Basically, presbyopia chokes visual processing, slowing down reading and even response times.

About 12 years ago, a neuroscientist named Uri Polat, director of the Visual and Clinical Neuroscience Lab at Bar-Ilan University in Tel Aviv, Israel, wondered if he could get around that by harnessing the science of neuroplasticity – essentially training your brain to process what it is seeing faster and more clearly. This might have the benefit of enhancing not only near vision but also reaction times. Low image quality puts a load on your visual-processing abilities “and probably creates a bottleneck for the cognitive levels of the brain,” says Polat, now chief scientific officer of the company that developed GlassesOff.

In a recently published study, Polat's app was tested on guys whose visual acuity really matters: Israeli fighter pilots. Their visual clarity improved by an average of 35 per cent, and their responsiveness to visual cues went up 25 per cent – crucial when trying to recognise a camouflaged enemy plane streaking toward you at 1100 kilometres an hour. Research on American baseball players showed

“PEOPLE WITH THE MOST ADVANCED PRESBYOPIA HAD THE GREATEST GAINS”

similar results. A study by Polat in *Nature Scientific Reports* found that users were able to speed through lines in the smallest font they could discern on a reading chart 25 words per minute faster than they could when they started using the app. People with the most advanced presbyopia had the greatest gains, raising reading speed from about 47-85 or so words a minute.

Those figures were impressive enough for me to be intrigued. GlassesOff is not the only vision-improvement app on the market, but it's the only one with any serious scientific study. (One competitor was fined by the FTC for claiming that it could improve vision without having published data to back it up.) But to believe it, I had to test it myself.

Since I wanted to know whether I was just imagining things or my eyes had really changed, I visited Dr Hugh Wright, a lead ophthalmologist with the Roper St. Francis Hospital System in South Carolina. He measured both my distance and near vision at around 20/25. My near vision is better than average – on a par with that of a person in his late 30s – but now that I'm 52, my presbyopia is likely accelerating.

I devoted the recommended 10 minutes to GlassesOff almost daily and used it for eight weeks, the minimum required time to see results. The app is at first novel and challenging, but the repetition becomes monotonous. A month in, though, I was squinting less. Headlights and road signs seemed sharper. I stayed with it, and three months after my first visit to Wright, my chart vision remained pretty much the same, but I was now reading without glasses again. What was tough for me to decipher before – the five-point fine print on a pale ale can – was clear to me now.

It could be because, according to the app, my contrast sensitivity had increased by 51 per cent and what Polat terms my “brain processing speed” – the rate at which I'm able to recognise a Gabor patch onscreen – shot up by 80 per cent.

Wright wasn't ready to fully endorse GlassesOff, saying the evidence is too limited to wholly support enhancing neuroplasticity to reverse presbyopia. But he didn't dismiss it, either. “Standard vision screening in clinics typically doesn't assess for contrast sensitivity or visual response times, which GlassesOff does,” he said. “If patients see improvement in these areas, then I see it as a plus.” Those two measures are critical when dropping into a steep wave or skating vert, and that may matter to me more than what a static eye chart says. “Neuroplasticity is a very real thing,” Wright added. Making more connections is good for your brain performance, regardless of what it might do for your eyes. But, doctor that he is, he warned that the app shouldn't be used in place of getting your eyes checked regularly or wearing glasses if you need them.

Ultimately, Polat and Wright agreed that nothing will completely halt presbyopia. Polat, of course, suggested that sticking with the program's maintenance regime (12 minutes a day once every two weeks) would help prevent my vision from declining significantly.

Even if it's not perfect, I'm still a writer and need to continue reading. And despite a skateboarding-related broken shoulder I wrote about for this magazine, sharing runs at the skate park with my 10-year-old son is about as rewarding as life gets. I need all the help I can find, so I'm going to stay with the app. ■

3 Other Apps That Keep You Agile



Improve your hearing
Clear Ears (clearworks4ears.com)
aims to use neuroplasticity to improve word recognition, particularly in noisy situations.



Improve your vocabulary
It doesn't get simpler than the **Vocabulary.com** app, which gives you a “word of the day,” plus a dictionary at your fingertips.



Improve your focus
You hone your attention through the m-word here (meditation), but the **Headspace** app makes it painless and kind of entertaining.

TAKING OVER THE FAMILY BUSINESS

As his name suggests, Roger Gracie is BJJ royalty. And as king of this modish martial art, he is well placed to get you fighting fit. *MH* rolls with the best

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY if we asked you where the best place to learn Brazilian jiu-jitsu was? Rio? São Paulo? Nope. Hammersmith, London, actually. It's here that you get to learn from arguably the best fighter ever to have hit the mats: 10-time world champion Roger Gracie. BJJ is the trending fitness pursuit, but Gracie was doing it long before it was cool. It's in his blood. His grandfather Carlos invented it and, together with his 21 kids (yes, really), they've formed a fighting dynasty synonymous with the sport.

Despite his heritage, Roger Gracie was not a natural. "When I started aged 14, I was a chubby kid and way behind the other boys," he says. "I had absolutely no muscle and would be easily overpowered." Forced to work harder on his technique, Gracie managed to catch up and then overtake the competition, thanks to his skill and long limbs, becoming his sport's most celebrated champion. Gracie completed a brief stint in MMA with the UFC – another institution founded by his family – but his sole focus these days is his west London BJJ academy.

"MMA involves a very different mentality, punching people until they black out," he says. "I prefer BJJ, where I can dominate my opponent without having to hit them in the face." It's a distinction that explains the martial art's flourishing popularity.

Gracie's own training is extremely specific. "There are lots of different scenarios – you on top, guy on your back – and I practise each for five minutes at a time." While certain techniques take years to master, the gym offers a platform for faster gains. "I used to do conditioning with weights, but the intensity meant I needed a long time to recover and my jiu-jitsu sessions suffered," he says. "Now, I combine Olympic lifting and hill sprints. The powerful lifts increase strength but don't leave me tired, and the hill sprints improve my fitness without requiring days of recovery."

Whatever your goal, it is sage advice: train with purpose and listen to your body. Your ambitions will have more of a fighting chance.



THE GRAPPLER
ROGER GRACIE,
10-time BJJ
world champion

ACADEMY
rogergracie.com

98kg
WEIGHT

201cm
REACH

193cm

HEIGHT

THE FOUNDING FATHERS

THE FIGHTING FIGUREHEADS WHO PAVED THE WAY FOR THE UNSTOPPABLE RISE OF ROGER



CARLOS GRACIE

Born in 1902, Carlos is the Gracie family patriarch and is credited with creating the BJJ practised around the world today, with the help of his younger brother Helio.

Did you know? Of his 21 children, 13 have gone on to earn BJJ black belts.



RORION GRACIE

Rorion was instrumental in spreading BJJ to the US. He worked as a film extra and, through his contacts in Hollywood, went on to help create the UFC.

Did you know? Rorion choreographed Mel Gibson's fight scenes in *Lethal Weapon* 1 and 3.



ROYCE GRACIE

Royce burst onto the world stage in 1993, when he represented Gracie Jiu Jitsu in UFC 1. A decade later, he was in the UFC Hall of Fame.

Did you know? He was chosen for his slim frame to prove that BJJ worked against larger rivals.

FIGHTING FITNESS

HARNESS GRACIE'S TRAINING PRINCIPLES AND BUILD THE BASELINE FITNESS YOU NEED TO POWER YOUR OWN BJJ

POWER CLEAN

5 sets of 5 reps, 3min rest

Grip a bar as you would a deadlift (A). Stand up and, in one motion, extend through your hips and push your elbows out to propel the bar up, catching it on your shoulders (B). Drop and repeat.



OVERHEAD SQUAT

5 sets of 5 reps, 3min rest

Take the bar from a rack with a wide grip and press overhead. Start the rep by bending your knees and sinking your hips back until you're in a deep squat (A). Contract your glutes to push up (B). That's one rep.

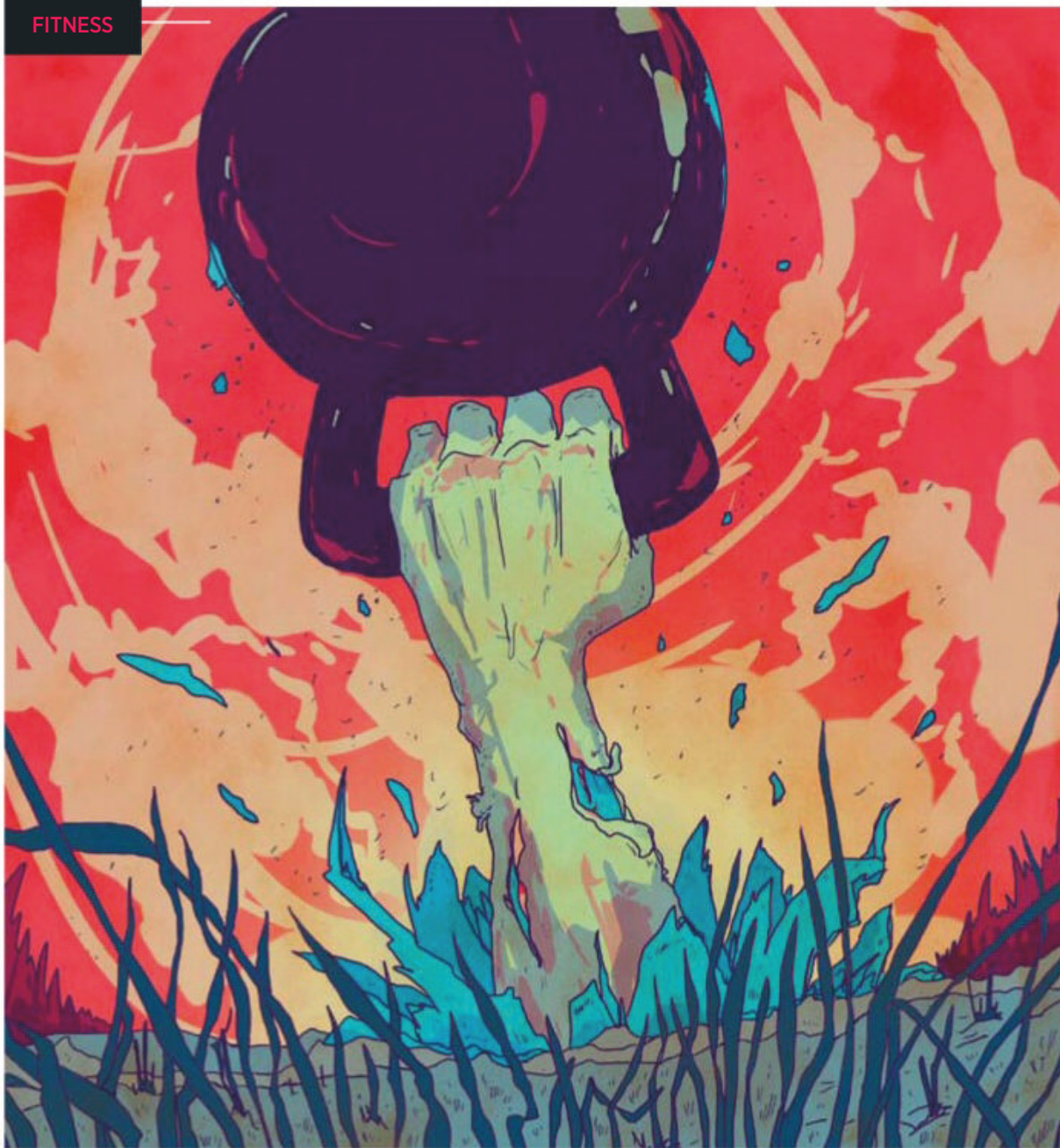


INCLINE SPRINTS

10 sets of 60sec on, 60sec off

Ramp up the speed and incline on a treadmill until you're at 70 per cent of max effort (A). Hold for 1min, then jump your legs on the sides to rest. Jump back on, but only let go once you're up to speed (B).





BURY THESE ZOMBIE FITNESS MYTHS

Time to debunk Instagram bro-science and other web BS to help you see better results, faster

BY ANDREW HEFFERNAN // ILLUSTRATIONS BY MICHAEL BYERS

1 Muscle soreness is essential to muscle growth

THE MYTH

You may think the ache and tightness you feel a day or two after you've blasted a muscle, technically known as delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS), is a gym badge of honour. First described in 1902, it's sometimes a result of muscle-fibre micro tears that occur as you lift. New to training? These can spur growth. But more damage doesn't equal more growth, says Andy Galpin, an associate professor of exercise physiology at California State University, Fullerton: "On a scale of 1 to 10,

pushing yourself to a level 7 of soreness might stimulate some growth, or it might not."

YOUR MOVE

Track your workouts based strictly on effectiveness. Choose key exercises (e.g., the squat, the push-up, and the pull-up) and do them at least once a week. If you're improving your reps, form or weight on these movements on a monthly basis, you're on the right track, even if you're only mildly sore.

2

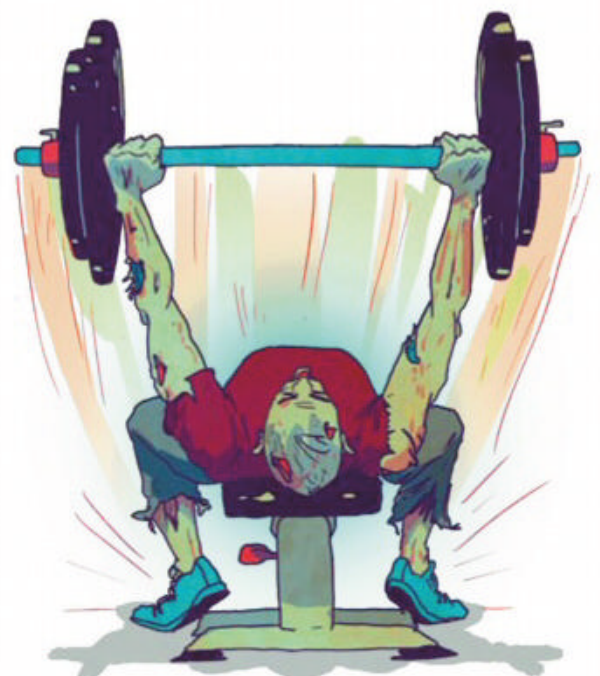
YOU'RE BORN AN EXPLOSIVE ATHLETE OR A SLOW PLODDER

THE MYTH

Exercise scientists long divided muscle fibres into two categories: slow-twitch fibres, the kind that get you through a marathon, and fast-twitch fibres, the ones that power a dunk. Decades ago, researchers believed their distribution was genetic, so no training could turn a skinny, slow-twitch distance runner into a muscular sprinter (or vice versa). A landmark 2018 study, coauthored by Galpin, of identical twins – one sedentary and one a lifelong distance runner – changed that. Thanks to miles of running, the active brother's muscles were almost entirely slow-twitch. The sedentary brother's? Fifty-fifty split between fast- and slow-twitch, which is what happened because he didn't train at all. Translation: you can work towards dunking.

YOUR MOVE

To build total-body function, resilience and overall health, include both fast- and slow-twitch exercises in every workout. Lead with a fast-twitch move, like an explosive bench press. End with slow exercises, like rows in which you take a full three seconds to lower the weight.



3 If you binge on pizza, you need to do a longer workout the next day

THE MYTH

It seems logical – working out burns kilojoules, so to burn more kilojoules, just work out more. Except that’s not what researchers at New York’s Hunter College found when studying the Hadza, northern Tanzanian hunter-gatherers. The Hadza got about four times as much exercise as an average American, yet they burned virtually the same number of kilojoules. Here’s why: exercise pushes your body to burn kilojoules, but there’s a cut-off point, one that’s different for every person. Approach that cut-off in your workout and your body starts burning far fewer kilojoules, instead possibly shutting down certain functions – like building new muscle tissue – to operate efficiently.

YOUR MOVE

If you’re trying to maintain a kilojoule deficit, calculate that over the course of a week, not a day. This allows you to have cheat days. And schedule workouts so that you’re consistently burning kilojoules. If you want to burn a few extra, don’t make your workout longer. Just spend the last 10 minutes doing high-intensity interval training.



4

YOU SHOULD NEVER DO ISOLATION EXERCISES

THE MYTH

An isolation exercise works just one muscle (think biceps curl). But the rise of CrossFit convinced most trainers that you don’t need moves like that. Why do a curl when you can squat or deadlift? These moves use more muscles, so wouldn’t they build real-world strength? Not so, according to a recent review of research on the leg extension. The weighted leg extension is simple, asking you to straighten your knee. But a Tufts University study found that doing just that still increased the walking speed of elderly men by almost 50 per cent. Even isolation exercises recruit stabilising muscles if performed correctly.

YOUR MOVE

Turn every move, whether a squat or an isolation move like a skull-crusher, into a full-body move by starting with three steps: flex your abs, squeeze your glutes and tighten your shoulder blades.

5

Lifting maximum weights is the fastest way to max muscle growth

THE MYTH

The biggest guys in your gym are the ones lifting the most weight. So you’ve got to go heavy, right? A Brazilian study indicates it’s not that simple. Scientists had young men do sets of either 7-9 reps or 21-36 reps. The first group lifted more weight, but both groups showed similar muscle growth. Should you lift heavy sometimes? Definitely. But if you’re feeling beat, you won’t lose any muscle by ditching heavy benches for push-ups.

YOUR MOVE

Vary rep ranges every couple of weeks, says action-star trainer Don Saladino. For 2 weeks, do 12-15 reps per set; for the next 2 weeks, do 8-10; for the last two weeks, do 4-6.

6

You have a 30-minute window after lifting to feed your muscles protein

THE MYTH

Gyms sell protein shakes because bro-science states there’s a 30-minute postworkout “anabolic window” for protein. Part of this is true: you need protein. If you’re chasing muscle, you require about 1.5 grams of it per kilogram of bodyweight daily. But according to a *Journal of the International Society of Sports Nutrition* review, your muscles are primed for protein within 3-4 hours of your workout.

YOUR MOVE

Focus on your daily protein intake by eating 3-5 small meals daily. Funny thing about that: you’ll likely eat protein within the 3-4-hour “anabolic window” before or after your lifting session. Your takeout: don’t stress. ■



HOT STUFF: THE CAYENNE HUGS THE ROAD FOR A THRILLING RIDE.



SEX MACHINE

The new Porsche Cayenne Coupe adds heat to the SUV market

BY STEPHEN CORBY

WE KNOW FOR A FACT that even Leonardo da Vinci had to do sketches and that George Lucas' original name for the Jedi was "Dai Nogas". So, it should come as no surprise that even the genius designers at Porsche don't always get things right first time.

What was surprising about the first Porsche Cayenne – one of the world's first premium SUVs, launched back in 2002 – was just how much it resembled one of those fish that hide at the bottom of the ocean because they are too ugly to look at. Such is the power of the Porsche brand, however, that the Cayenne went on to be such a huge success that it helped to change the global car market forever. Last century, SUVs were bought only by men who hated showers and loved thick socks

and beards. Today even blokes in expensive suits desire them, even Rolls-Royce makes one and they make up almost 70 per cent of Porsche sales.

That's right, the company that was once defined by the 911 and then broadened by the brilliant Boxster and Cayman, is effectively an SUV brand.

Fortunately, you don't have to be aesthetically blind to buy a Cayenne these days, because the design has evolved enormously and the latest and greatest version, the Coupe, is genuinely sex on wheels. It may have taken them a while, but the crayon-wielders at Porsche have finally realised that the way to make a Cayenne look good is to put as much of that 911 DNA into it as is engineeringly possible.

Look at the Cayenne Coupe from side on and you will see the svelte "flyline" of the world's most beautiful sports car sitting on top of an SUV platform. It's almost as if Porsche has created a 911 Mardi Gras float, only prettier. So determined were the Germans to make this thing look good that they lowered the rear of the car significantly, which, in turn, created some serious issues with downforce over the back end (a rare case of form over function). To counteract this, the Coupe has been given a whopping pop-out rear spoiler, which, when fully extended, you could probably use as a surf board. At speeds above 90km/h, this spoiler leaps out of your rear end in order to grab enough air, and shove it downwards, to keep

those massive rear tyres glued to the road (your wheels also have a better grip on the ground thanks to the fact that they are 18mm further apart than on a standard Cayenne, effectively giving the Coupe bigger "shoulders", another visual win).

Being a Porsche, there is quite a lot of power being directed towards those tyres, and the front ones as well, because this is, notionally at least, an all-wheel-drive vehicle. Even the base model of the Cayenne Coupe, yours for just \$128,400, gets a handy 250kW and 450Nm, from a 3.0-litre V6 turbo engine.

Step up to the S Coupe and you'll find that same engine up-tuned to make 324kW and 550Nm for your \$166,600. The one you really want, of course,



is the \$254,000 Turbo, which boasts an enormous and hilarious twin-turbo V8 that produces a face-warping 404kW and 770Nm. Even in a big, luxurious soft roader that weighs more than two tonnes, that's enough grunt to shove you to 100km/h in around four seconds flat, on your way to a very Germanic top speed of 286km/h. Driving the Turbo Coupe is very much like jumping on a carnival ride designed by an almost deaf lunatic. Put your foot down and the V8 howl is stupendous, almost stupid and the nose of the car rears up each time you do so, as various laws of physics fight out a court battle somewhere in front of you.

It should be a nightmare to throw into corners, because it is, by any sane measure, just too

much car, but somehow the whole thing just works. The perfectly weighted steering and superlative suspension combine to make any winding road a hell of a lot of fun.

Unfortunately, the Turbo does seem to be set up more for race tracks than dirt roads because the ride is on the dominatrix side of firm, but if you don't want to worry about the fillings being vibrated out of your teeth you can always go for one of the less aggressive, and less expensive, Cayenne Coupe models.

Looking good does require some compromises, of course, and that sleek, low coupe roof line does cut into the headroom a bit, particularly in the rear, but to counteract that the sporty seats are dropped 30mm lower than in a standard Cayenne, which also

“IT’S AS IF PORSCHE HAS CREATED A 911 MARDI GRAS FLOAT”

improves the driving position. A vast, fixed sun roof, which uses more than two square metres of glass, also helps to make the cabin feel bright and airy.

Inside, a high-tech touch screen reacts before your finger even reaches the glass, while a super-cool Sport Chrono dial allows you to switch between various aggressive modes and offers a Push-to-Pass button that unleashes maximum power and noise for 20 seconds. It might just be the best button ever fitted to a car. The fact that the roof sits

20mm lower does cost you when it comes to boot space, with the luggage area shrinking to a still very practical 625 litres.

Overall, though, the compromises are few when it comes to the Cayenne. People who want a Porsche, yet need more space than a sports car, no longer need look as if they're driving a bloated fish on wheels. Indeed, it is now possible to buy a Porsche SUV that looks so good you don't even need to drive it to fall in love with it. As the billboards say, this beast is a beauty. ■

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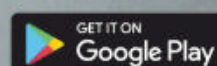
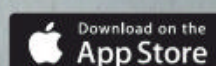


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DEPARTURES



PERU

04 20

Higher Learning

Our creative director's three-day trek in the Peruvian Andes left him breathless, exhausted . . . and enlightened. Here's what can happen when you seek a peak

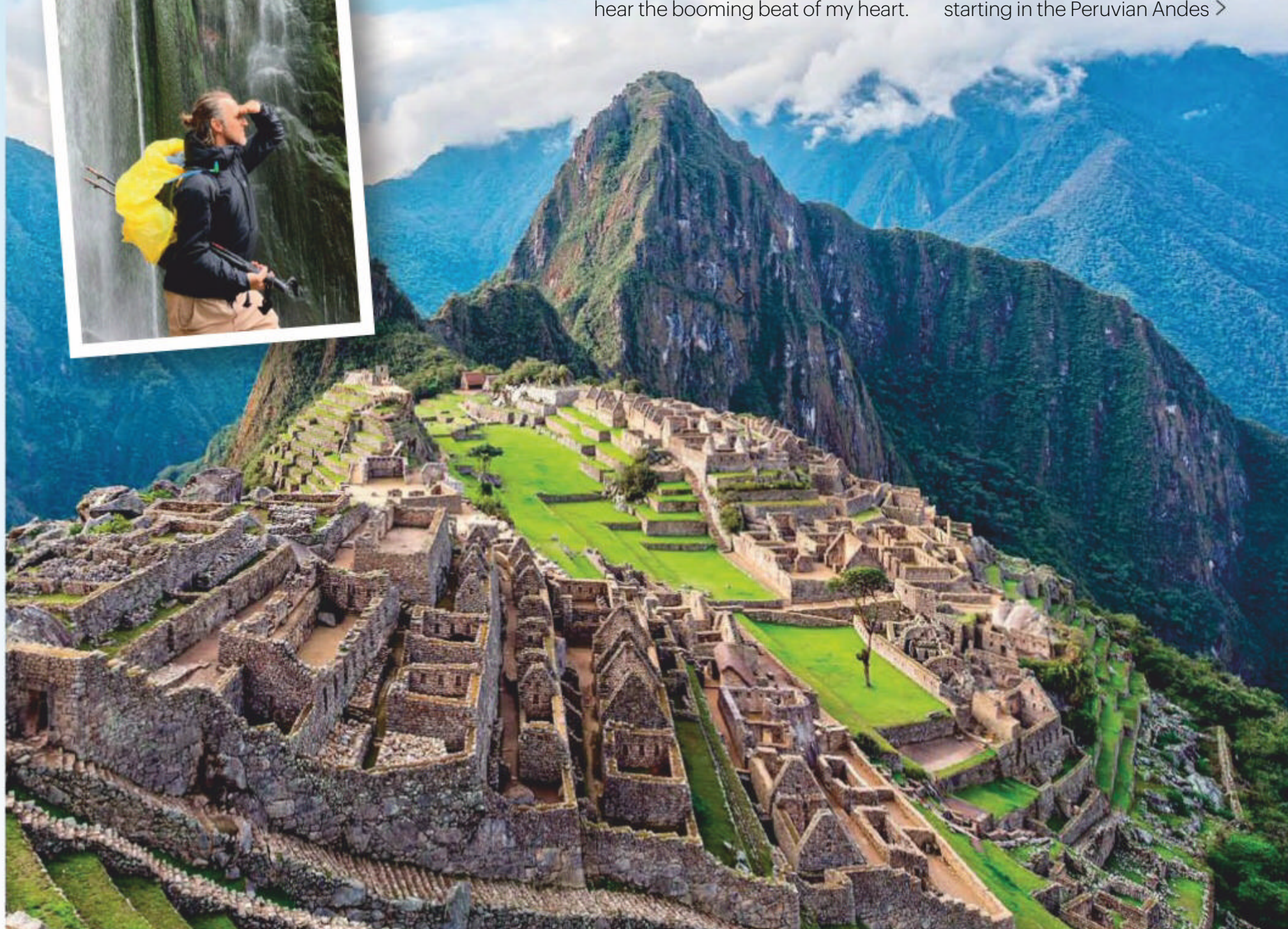
BY DAVID ASHFORD



IT'S ABOUT AN HOUR since lunch on the first day and my first-ever stab at trekking hasn't got off to the most auspicious start. I'm about 3200m above sea level in the Peruvian Andes and my ill-prepared body is being exposed to altitude for the first time. I enjoy the odd trail run and thought I was in good-enough shape to tackle this three-day trek through the heart of the Inca empire. But the steep gradient is relentless and in amongst the eery stillness that surrounds our group I can actually hear the booming beat of my heart.

I'm sucking in almighty breaths and have never felt more middle-aged. To compound this feeling of inadequacy I'm suddenly overtaken by our 20 porters who are jogging (yes, *jogging*) past us. Having packed up the whole lunch set-up back at base, they're now racing ahead to erect our tents and toilets and prepare dinner. Some of these guys are in their 60s; all of them are carrying colossal 20kg packs that make my paltry 5kg day-pack look kindly-like by comparison.

As an introduction to trekking, starting in the Peruvian Andes >





might be akin to having your first crack at surfing at Pipeline. Fortunately, I'm here with the experienced guides from Intrepid, who specialise in pushing the boundaries of the more adventurous traveller. In our party of 10 is AFL's premier ruckman Brodie Grundy, who's here with his partner Rachael and backing up from a successful trek to Everest base camp last year.

JUNGLE FEVER

Our Peruvian adventure had started days earlier, far from the dizzying heights of the Andes, with a river-boat journey deep into the steamy heart of the Amazonian rainforest. Climatic contrasts could scarcely be

sharper in this diverse country. There are 32 recognised climate systems in the world and 28 of these can be found in Peru. At our jungle lodge we're slightly concerned to discover the dense, moist heat means that rooms can have only three sides. In an environment where tarantulas, anacondas and even jaguars are prevalent, I'm concerned that I might be in for long, tense nights covering behind the mosquito net with one eye open. But this incredible place has so many other-worldly treats in store for us it isn't long before we've all submitted to the rhythms of the rainforest. Our guide for this section of the trip is Victor, a man of the jungle if ever there was

one. Born nearby in Puerto Maldonado, Victor tells me the story behind the first birthday present his "Daddy" ever bought him: he took Victor into a machete store at 12 and let him pick one out. With that treasured gift he spent his days breaking off Brazil nuts at the plantation where his father worked and every cent he earned paid for his own schooling and clothes. As well as an impressive work ethic, his father passed on a profound passion for, and knowledge of, the jungle. Over two memorable days we enjoy a vibrant showreel of natural wonders, including a flock of bright-red Macaw parrots getting their daily minerals at a clay lick at dawn, pick out the

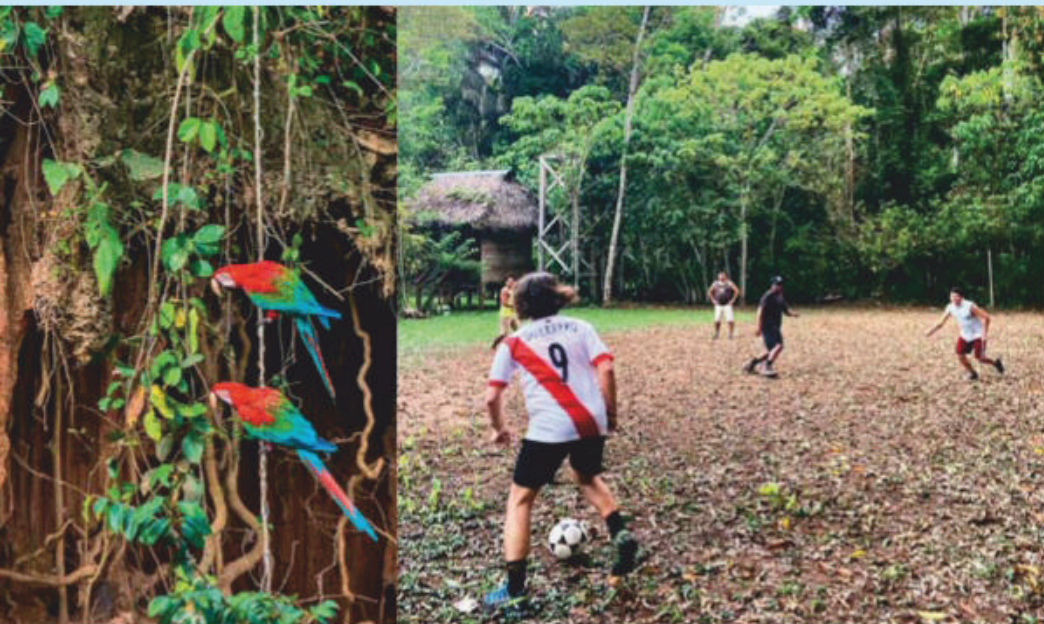
shining eyes of Caiman alligators on the banks of the Tambopata river on a night safari and follow an army of cackling capuchin (think "organ-grinder") monkeys from a viewing tower above the tree canopy. The weirdest and most wonderful new discovery of all is the capybara: imagine a 60kg guinea pig with webbed feet. The mood is tense on our night safari as our boat drifts silently just metres away from a petrified capybara, an alligator braced just a wild lunge away from its would-be prey, both frozen in our torchlight. I'm torn between the survival of my new favourite giant rodent and the prospect of witnessing a Discovery Channel-style bloodfest first-hand, though I needn't have worried as the capybara and alligator share an extraordinary pact that requires them to stay close. In return for the reptile's protection, the plucky capybara keeps an eye out for the

"I'm torn between the survival of the giant rodent and a Discovery Channel-style bloodfest"



FROM FAR LEFT: A FAMILY OF CAPYBARAS; ASHFORD GOES OTTER-WATCHING; A TARANTULA AND THE OPEN-TO-THE-ELEMENTS JUNGLE LODGE BED; VICTOR CATCHES A PIRHANA WITH HIS STICK AND STRING.





gator's only predator: the jaguar.

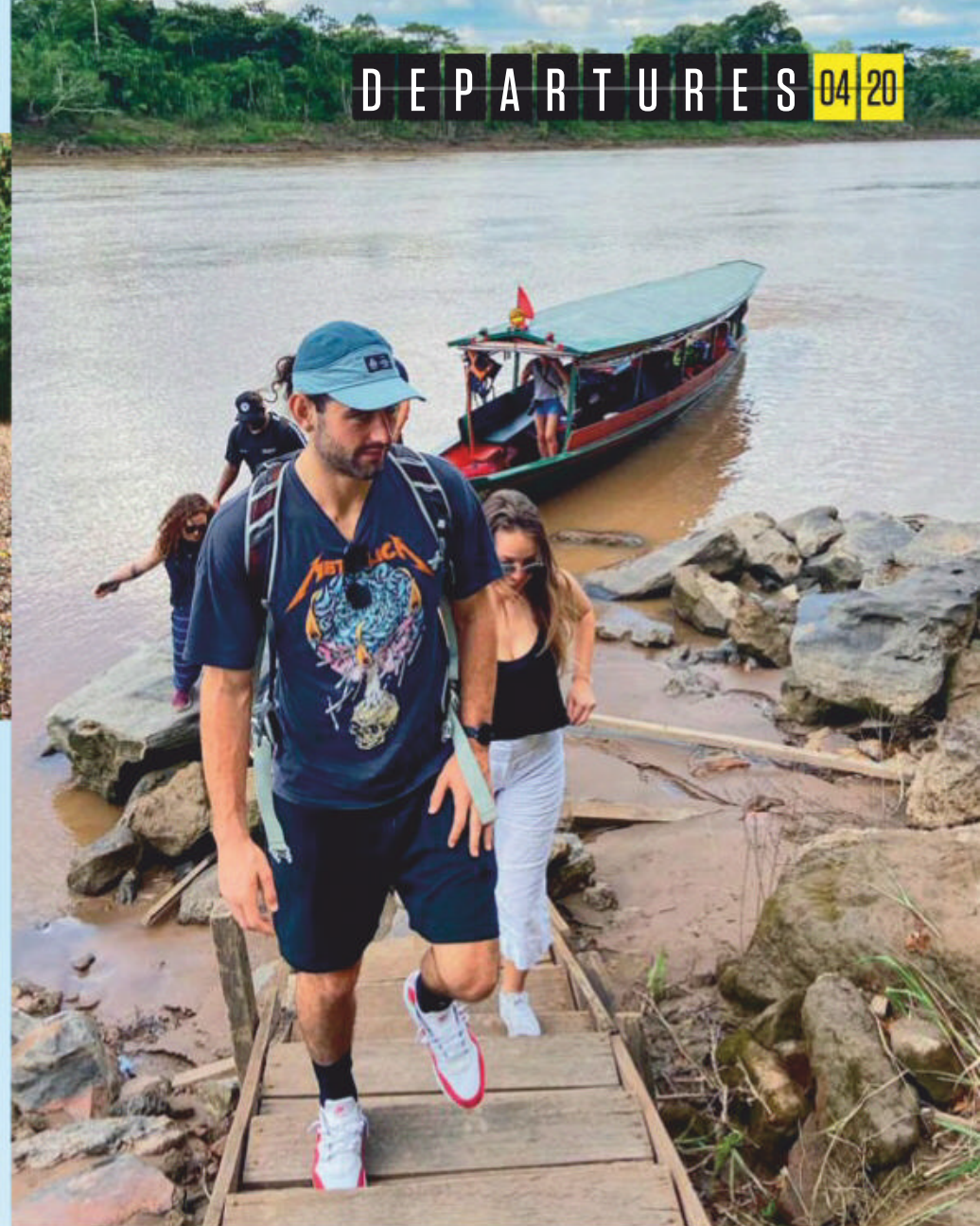
This stretch of river has four species of piranha, and when Collingwood star Grundy and I have a fish-off I've finally found a playing field upon which we can compete as equals. Despite constant bites, after 20 piranha-less minutes it is 0-0. Our guide Victor, however, takes just seconds to whip out a white piranha with his simple stick, string and red-meat set-up.

In a location this remote there's limited access to healthcare, so the locals make do with the natural resources that surround them. We tour the Nape Lodge's medicinal gardens and wonder at the mosquito repellents, stomach settlers, anaesthetics, decongestants and even cosmetics that are growing in every shade around us. Causing the most curiosity is the winding stem of the ayahuasca plant. This powerful hallucinogen is the subject of much debate in the wider world right now, but it's been an integral part of the culture here for centuries and Victor is keen to share his personal experience of it. Administered only by the local

FROM TOP LEFT: THE STEAMY TAMBOPATA RIVER; A CURIOUS LOCAL; MACAWS AT THE CLAY LICK AT DAWN; AN IMPROMPTU JUNGLE KICKABOUT; GRUNDY TAKES ON THE AMAZON IN THE FRESHEST OF WHITE KICKS.

shaman in sacred ceremonies after much spiritual and physical preparation, the drug brought Victor face-to-face with his beloved deceased father "as clearly as if he were right next to me". Victor says you can look at those around you and see their health issues as if you were an expert assessing an X-ray. When I ask if such an intense experience is followed by a downer-effect, he assures me that he feels possessed with the power and speed of a wild animal for days afterwards, and indeed that the benefits can last for months. As he finishes his recollections, a bright-blue dragonfly appears, as if on cue, and flies right up to his face. Victor gives it a quick nod of approval and it buzzes off. He tells me later the insect was merely thanking him for passing on his respect for the nature around him, and that this kind of arthropodan endorsement is a regular occurrence.

It's time to come back down



to earth and I'm delighted to find that Peru's greatest passion extends into the jungle. A group of the local staff challenges us to a soccer match. Grundy, in the midst of the off-season, briefly weighs up playing an unfamiliar code on a goat-track of a pitch and sensibly decides to sit this one out. The rest of us do Australia proud, overcoming tough local conditions – like agoutis crossing the pitch and waist-high, snake-infested bushes right behind our goal – to run out 10-7 victors. With the kitchen staff smarting from the defeat, it's time to leave the jungle, fly back west and prepare ourselves for the serious trekking ahead. >

THE GEAR

Stock up. Because the jungle is no place for the poorly prepared

LEDLENSER MH7

The alligators were easy to spot as this head torch lit up the riverbank like the MCG.

A charge of the battery lasted 10 hours. \$165; ledlenser.com.au



SALOMON XA PRO 3D

These hardy soles could handle any terrain the trek threw at them.

\$230; salomon.com.au



ARC'TERYX PROTON LT HOODY

Durable signature jacket from the innovative Canadian outdoor brand. Exceptional breathability during the trek, but plenty of warmth for the cool Andean nights. \$390; arcteryx.com.au



MOUNTAIN MAN

As an alternative way to appreciate this famous mountain range before taking in the splendour of Machu Picchu, we take the less-trodden path of the Quarry Trail. The iconic Inca Trail has become extremely overcrowded in recent years and this three-day trek is sold as a way to take in the beautiful Andean scenery without the crowds. The only potential downside is that the last section before the ancient site is taken by train. You don't actually rock up to the famous Sun Gate on foot.

With time limited we need to acclimatise quickly. We fly into the picturesque ancient capital Cusco, which is deemed too extreme at 3400m. So, to ease us in we drive down to a more manageable 2800m – to the Insta-worthy town of Ollantaytambo in the Sacred Valley. On route we get to experience some of the amazing work Intrepid does with the local communities.

We visit the home of the Huaynoccopac family, where three generations of females prepare us a traditional Peruvian meal using the Pachamanca technique, which involves burying the food in a bed of hot stones. A collective of 10 village families, who'd previously been living solely on whatever vegetables they could grow in their garden, can now educate their children and add meat to their diets thanks to the income provided to them by being part of the adventure itinerary.

FROM TOP LEFT: THE INCREDIBLE PORTERS RACE BY WITH A 20KG PACK EACH; THE HIGHEST HOME ON THE MOUNTAIN; ASHFORD STRUGGLES NEAR THE SUMMIT BEFORE GETTING HIS SECOND WIND; AL FRESCO ANDEAN DINING ABOVE THE CLOUDS.

After waking up early for the trek, I'm feeling breathless just from fetching a few supplies from the local store. The sudden altitude has left me with a raging headache and extreme nausea. I'm about to find out that it's only going to get worse as our group climbs over 1000m within the next 24 hours.

...

I'm seven hours into the second day of the trek. We're traversing the rugged upper reaches of Mount Puccaqasa and the once-in-a-lifetime views have long lost their lustre. The summit seems eternally 'just out of sight' and my smart watch is constantly alerting me that my heart rate is exceeding 150BPM. I'm in a slow, steady pattern of 10 weary steps upwards, pausing to allow my heart rate to return to 110BPM, then 10 more steps upwards and repeat. With little left in my tank, I scoff when my attentive guide Edwin tells me it will be worth it when I make it to the top. I question if I ever will. He reminds me that altitude suffering has little to do with overall fitness and affects everyone differently. Even an elite athlete like Brodie and his partner, with their Everest experience behind them, have had to turn around due to

symptoms of altitude sickness.

I start feeling that powerful urge to lie down and sleep for a while, though I remember from the movie *Everest* that this would be a seriously poor move. At this point Edwin gets out the oxygen and decides it's time for me to put on the mask and breath in a few big ones. After 10 minutes or so the oxygen has just about given me the boost to push on to the summit. When I get there, I'm so overjoyed at the prospect of no more uphill grinding that I feel immediately rejuvenated. And Edwin was 100 per cent right: this was worth it.

I begin to realise our group is

made up of either uphill people or downhill people. I'm definitely in the latter category and with endorphins flowing I fly down the mountain to our camp, finally taking in the breathtaking scenery I had neglected on my ascent.

After a glorious night's sleep under the stars, the last day of trekking is a much gentler descent into the sun-drenched green basin of the Sacred Valley, and we arrive like returning warriors, stray mountain dogs in tow, back in Ollantaytambo where we had begun, but now filthy, beaming and blissfully unaffected by altitude.



LEFT: THE FAMILY DIGS UP OUR ANDEAN LUNCH. RIGHT: A LLAMA APPROACHES THE SPLENDOR OF MACHU PICCHU; THE INTREPID PORTERS TAKE IN THE ICONIC SITE FOR THE FIRST TIME; GRUNDY GETS A HUG FROM ANA HILDA, OUR MANOS UNIDAS WAITRESS.





“Edwin gets out the oxygen . . . it’s time for me to put on the mask and breath in a few big ones”

SITE TO BEHOLD

As our group joins the bustling early-morning crowds outside one of the ‘New Seven Wonders of the World’, I’m actually relieved to be taking in this experience washed and refreshed rather than battling through the tourist hoards on foot with a festering rucksack.

The excitement of our group is heightened by a touching gesture by Intrepid for all 20 of the hardy porters who accompanied us on the hike. Despite their years of lugging trekkers’ tents, toilets and ‘essentials’ up and down the trails, none of them had actually visited this cultural icon due to the high admission fees. Today, however, they’re going to enter alongside us in their vibrant red uniforms.

Nothing prepares you for the beauty that awaits you when you cut through the crowds and take in the full majesty of Machu

Picchu sitting on the mountain ridge. As everyone gets the full scope of the ancient citadel in their viewfinders for the first time a strange silence replaces the tourist chatter. We still don’t know exactly how or why Machu Picchu was built back in the 15th century. It was in use for only around 80 years before being abandoned as the Spanish conquistadors took charge. Due to its remote location, it remained undiscovered by the outside world until 1911, when a Yale historian, accompanied by a Peruvian guide, became the first to bring ‘The Lost City of the Incas’ to international attention. Time at the site is limited to four hours under the supervision of a guide, but this becomes a welcome requirement when you hear the astonishing details of how this wonder was built in an unforgiving location without mortar or wheels.

...
The perfect final stop on this trip to the heart of the Incan Empire is the ancient capital Cusco. This beautifully weathered city feels European but drips with Incan history. On a trip that has been peppered with so many heart-warming initiatives it is fitting that our final meal was to be at the Café Manos Unidas, a vocational training ground for young adults with special needs. Our delicious repast is prepared and served by students who might otherwise have struggled to get a start in the workplace.

As our excited waitress, Ana Hilda, gives everyone in our group a hug, I appreciate what the likable AFL superstar Grundy had told me at the start of this adventure when I asked how a trip like this might affect his off-season. He said that while you may be forced to eat differently and have your workout routine disrupted, the benefits that travel and experience of another culture bring helps you to grow as a person and give you strength for the next season and many more beyond. ■



EXPLORE Intrepid Travel has a 15-day *Sacred Land of the Incas* trip priced from \$3311. intrepidtravel.com

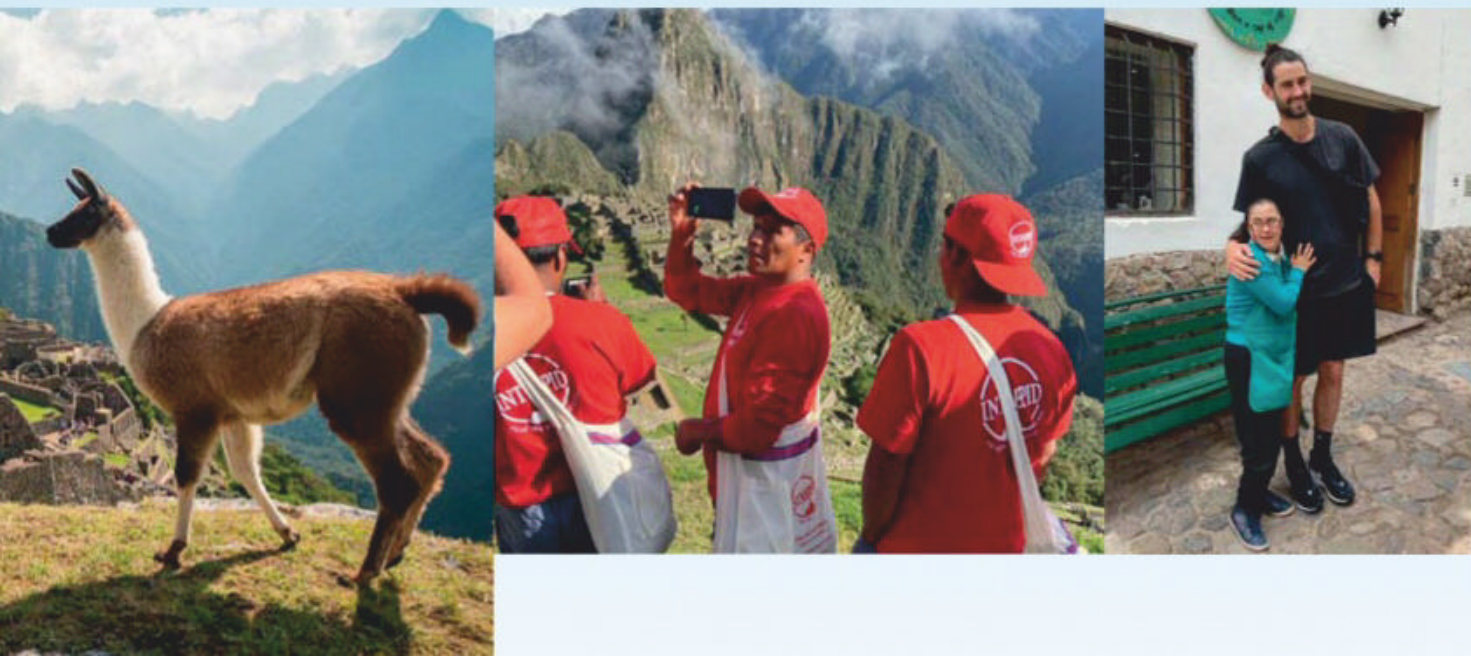
FLY Latam now flies non-stop to Lima daily. latam.com

STAY Hotel Antigua Miraflores A good base to explore Lima from is in one of its most upmarket districts. Relax in this stylish colonial mansion before the serious adventure begins. antiguamiraflores.com

EAT Nuna Raymi, Cusco A hip, lively restaurant serving Peruvian favourites with a modern twist. Plenty of quirky cocktails to wash down your marinated guinea pig or alpaca skewers. nunaraymicusco.com

Café Manos Unidas Coffee and baked treats served and prepared by young people with intellectual disabilities manosunidasperu.org/programs/manos-unidas-cafe

RELAX The easiest way to get to Machu Picchu is via a spectacular 90-minute train journey from Ollantaytambo to nearby Aguas Calientes.

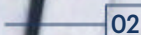




03



02



06



07

05



04



09



10



11



We've taken 13 essentials and created 31 looks – that's a whole month of style, sorted. Minimal clothing, maximum utility and exceptional value for money.

- 01 Chintz Comfort blazer \$159 Zara
- 02 Chintz Comfort trousers \$19.95 Zara
- 03 The Keb Wool T-shirt \$199.95 Fjallraven
- 04 Ralph Sampson Perf Lo sneakers \$130 Puma
- 05 Pinstripe denim shirt \$22.95 Zara
- 06 Linen bomber jacket \$249 Country Road
- 07 Floral shirt
- 08 Tailored track pants
- 09 Slim-fit jeans \$129.95 Superdry
- 10 Navy leather sandals
- 11 Dark blue suede shoes
- 12 Short sleeve shirt \$45.95 Zara
- 13 Pure linen shirt

Accessories (A): Heritage tie from \$59.95 T.M Lewin, Belt \$89.95 Ted Baker



MODEL: SEID AT BOSS MODELS; FASHION ASSISTANT: NADIA EKSTEEN; GROOMING: TERRI TOMSETT AT ONE LEAGUE; PHOTOGRAPHY ASSISTANT: JOSHUA KYLE JONATHAN

13 ITEMS 31 LOOKS

SHOP SMART WITH WARDROBE STAPLES THAT WILL
GIVE YOU STYLE OPTIONS FOR YEARS TO COME

COMPILED BY **AZEEZ JACOBS**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **GARRETH BARCLAY**

Right now is the perfect time to revamp your style. But take note: the first step to building your interchangeable wardrobe is a foundation, of hard-working, versatile pieces. (Think: bang for your buck.)

This means fewer clothes, better quality, more outfits. Mix and match the pieces here to create 31 distinct looks. Just keep a note of your body measurements on your phone so you can access these digits at any time (and keep your tailor on speed dial).

6 + 5 + 3 + 9 + 4 + A



Hit the Mark

A garment must have the perfect balance of style and function to receive our *MH* seal of approval. For example, a bomber jacket is an outer layer that looks good on anyone, so invest in a simple, clean-cut style in a versatile shade.

6 + 3 + 5 + 8 + 4







Serving Style

From your 9-to-5 grind in the city to downtime on weekends, you need pieces that pack a sharp, classic look (for all occasions) and are made from lightweight and durable fabrics that let you move with ease.

5 + 3





1+12+2+4+A

6+3+2+4+A

3+8+4

5+3+8+10

7+9+11+A

1+13+3+8+4

6+12+9+11

7+8+10

12+2+10

Invest in the Best

The future-fit work wardrobe is one built on previously forbidden pieces like denim, bomber jackets and trainers. Think about it: your on-the-job clothes should feel just as cutting-edge as your big ideas in the boardroom.

1 + 13 + 9 + 4 + A



Scents of Identity

A new season calls for a new scent, so we've rounded up some of the latest, most versatile fragrances to help you move with the times

BY ERIN DOCHERTY PHOTOGRAPHY BY EDWARD URRUTIA

THERE'S NO RULE that you can't wear the same cologne for the rest of your life. There really isn't. But you're better than that. That's why we think you should get on board the ol' seasonal cologne swap – trust us, it's the bomb.

Why not take the opportunity to let a new fragrance whisper some sweet

nothings to someone at the bar, strike up some fresh convo in the elevator or mark your turf in the board room?

It's time to switch out those bright notes for some warm, woody autumnal tones. Need guidance? We're going to talk you through some of the best new fragrances worth keeping an eye/nose on this season.



Narciso Rodriguez For Him Bleu Noir Extreme EDT, from \$100

With spicy top notes of cardon and nutmeg, and warm, woody tones like blue cedar, ebony and black vetiver, this is a clean, sharp scent that is very much a super-charged version of the original. It's ballsy, but not intrusive.

Jean Paul Gaultier Le Beau EDT, from \$102

This is a reboot of the iconic 1995 classic 'Le Male' (loved by approximately one zillion guys around the globe). While it still has a lot of the woody characteristics we love about the OG, this modern version gives the scent a fresh twist with a splash of bergamot, coconut wood and tonka bean. And the bottle itself has undergone a makeover. (Has he been working out?)

Calvin Klein Eternity Flame for Men EDT, from \$69

This is a cranked-up version of the best-selling 'Eternity' fragrance, boasting hints of leather and amber for a warm yet inexplicably fresh scent. It's a belter in our books. P.S. There's also a version for women, so you could get on board the 'his and her' thing if that's your bag.

Dior Homme EDT, from \$107

If you liked Dior Homme Original, you're going to love this reinterpreted version by François Demachy (he's Dior perfumer creator). Intensely woody and warm, it has an underlying sensuality that makes it perfect for evenings. Robert Pattinson is the face of it. Smart move, marketing wizards.

Bleu de CHANEL Parfum Spray by CHANEL, from \$140

While the cologne itself isn't new, Chanel has recently dropped a bigger-sized (300ml) bottle because obviously no one can get enough of the stuff. And we totally get it – this is one fragrance that will never let you down. It's blend of incense, ginger and citrus is the bomb.

Creed Aventus Cologne, from \$349

It takes balls to update a cult classic. But if anyone can do it right, it's Creed. This new version has an edgy, modern twist – it's like the younger brother who breaks all the rules and is always two drinks deep before you've even hit the bar. With a leathery balsamic base, it's relaxed, effusive and the perfect trans-seasonal fragrance.

**Carolina Herrera Bad Boy EDT**, from \$106

Careful, looks like we've got a badass here. It's time to channel your rebellious side and dance with this latest creation from Carolina Herrera. It's an oriental, aromatic spritz that blends lighter notes like sage, green bergamot and pepper with the warmth and darkness of tonka beans, cocoa and amber wood. It's intense, vigorous . . . and might just get you into trouble, you crazy thing.

Givenchy Gentleman EDP, from \$113

This is a proper big-boy scent for those who are tired of all the citrusy numbers out there. It pairs the warmth of fiery wood with the subtle elegance of iris for a light, yet powerful fragrance. Unlike most after-dark scents, this one plays the long game and won't wear off by Happy Hour. You'll wake up the morning after, wherever you may be, smelling like the gent that you are.

FERRAGAMO by Salvatore Ferragamo EDT, from \$96

While this has all the vibrant bergamot and zesty lemon you'd expect from a classic Mediterranean scent, the combination of woody, leathery notes gives it an unexpected, contemporary twist – it's a true celebration of the brand's strong Italian roots *chef's kiss*. On top of that, the bottle is a beauty (which doesn't hurt one bit).

David Beckham Follow Your Instinct EDT, from \$49

Thirteen years after the launch of 'Instinct', Beckham has dropped a new version – and we're totally on board. It has an aromatic, woody, earthy tone and brings this sense of exploration and adventure. You'll kind of feel like Bear Grylls, even if you're just hangin' at the photocopy machine.

Penhaligon's Portraits Terrible Teddy, \$379

This is the private jet of fragrances. There's just something about it that makes you feel noble. With warm notes of incense and amber, as well as leather and cedarwood, it has a spicy-smoky scent. Wear it when you meet the Queen.



A Seiko SSC757J Prospex Sumo Chronograph

This solar-powered watch delivers 200m water resistance and a six-month power reserve once it's fully charged. \$1100

B TAG Heuer Carrera Calibre 16

Inspired by Tag Heuer's history with motorsports, this chronograph offers a winning mix of style, functionality and timeless looks. \$6150

C Raymond Weil Freelancer Automatic

Stylish and robust, this watch features a tachymeter bezel that's used to calculate units per hour – most commonly speed. \$4395

E Ball Engineer Hydrocarbon NEDU Chronograph

Built for a full-contact lifestyle, this chronograph offers a shock resistance of 7500Gs and a water resistance of 600m. \$6750

D Mido Commander Chronograph

This watch's movement is COSC-certified – a distinction held by only three per cent of Swiss watches. Accuracy is basically guaranteed. \$2800

F Citizen JY8109-85E

Deceptively lightweight thanks to the titanium case, this ultra functional watch also lets you tell the time in 43 cities around the world. \$1599

CRUNCH TIME

A chronograph has become the watch of choice for every self-respecting man of action. Here's why

BY LUKE BENEDICTUS PHOTOGRAPHY BY EDWARD URRUTIA

DURING WWII, British army corporal Clive Nutting was locked up in Stalag Luft III, a Luft-waffe-run prisoner-of-war camp. Using his stainless-steel Rolex, he began timing the patrols of his guards and, in 1944, launched a daring plan to break free (the thwarted attempt would later inspire *The Great Escape*).

During the US Grand Prix in 1969, the late, great Formula One champion Jochen Rindt clinched victory in his Lotus, relying on his TAG Heuer Autavia to monitor the speed of his lap-times.

In 1970, when Apollo 13 was rocked by an explosion 320,000km from Earth, astronaut Jack Swigert famously used his Omega Speedmaster to time the engine burns in order to manually steer the spacecraft home.

What unites this plucky trio is not just their daredevil spirit but their wristwear. Notably, they all wore chronograph watches.

A combination of the Greek

“chromos” meaning time and “graph” meaning to write, a chronograph measures and records time intervals in seconds, minutes and/or hours. Truth be told, it's really just a fancy word for a stopwatch.

The visual identity of a chronograph is defined by the presence of sub-dials that keep track of seconds and elapsed minutes and hours. Some may also include tachymeter and telemeter scales used for measuring speed and distance, respectively.

For those of us not defying death on a daily basis, a chrono's time-measuring capacity is still relevant. You might use it to track how long you've got left on a parking meter or simply to ensure you don't overcook the spaghetti. The chronograph may be a watch for the adventurer in us all, but it's also handy for life's less intrepid missions. After all, no-one really likes soggy pasta. ■



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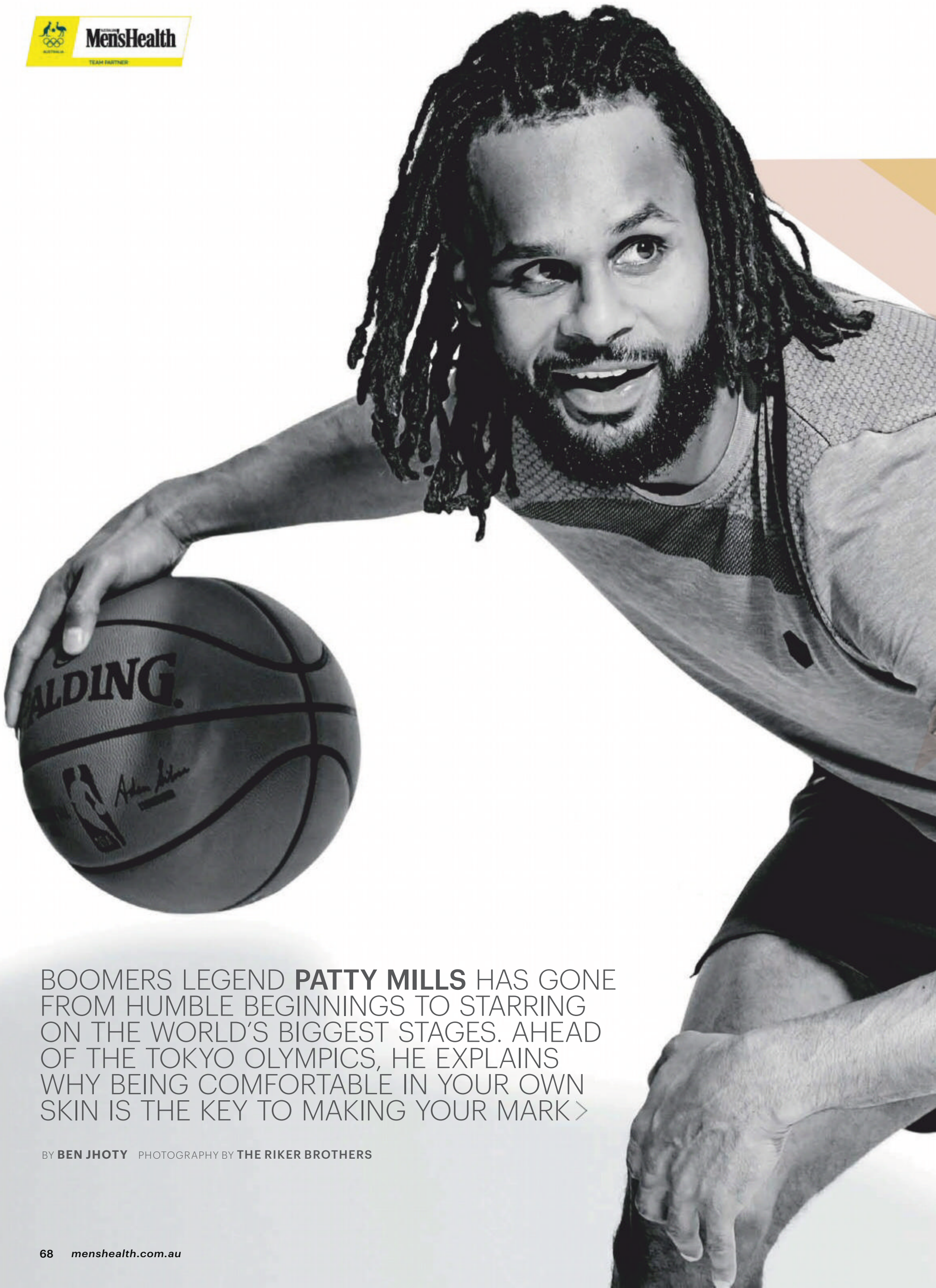
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BOOMERS LEGEND **PATTY MILLS** HAS GONE FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS TO STARRING ON THE WORLD'S BIGGEST STAGES. AHEAD OF THE TOKYO OLYMPICS, HE EXPLAINS WHY BEING COMFORTABLE IN YOUR OWN SKIN IS THE KEY TO MAKING YOUR MARK >

BY **BEN JHOTY** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **THE RIKER BROTHERS**

SHOOTING STAR





MAMBA MENTALITY:
KOBE TOOK A STRONG
INTEREST IN
MILLS' CAREER.



Patty Mills is reclining on a king-sized bed in a room at the Four Seasons hotel in Denver watching *Shark Tank*. It's a frigid minus 8° outside, an early morning blizzard blanketing the mile-high city in snow.

Mills, who's just arrived from Sacramento, is in the middle of a brutal road trip that will see his San Antonio Spurs play six games in nine days ahead of the All-Star break. With another 'back-to-back' starting the following day, the Spurs point guard is just happy to get off his feet.

"Take the deal, Lori," he shouts at the screen. Mills loves *Shark Tank*. It's one of the shows he regularly catches in his downtime on the road. Something else he likes to do when he's got spare time to kill? Dance. "I could do traditional dancing before I could play basketball," he tells me later on. "The first songs I learned on my guitar were traditional ones." Music and dance are aspects of his culture he can take anywhere, Mills explains. A way to remember home and even to remind him, if he needed it, exactly where he came from.

The arc of that journey is worth retracing, mainly because of its sheer unlikeliness – it is, after all, a long way from Canberra or indeed, Thursday Island, where Mills' grandfather made a homemade ring for him when he was just two years old, to a fancy hotel room in Colorado. The son of an Aboriginal mother who was part of the Stolen Generations and a Torres Strait Islander father, Mills is the second Indigenous Australian ever to play in the NBA. The first was the journeyman power forward Nathan Jawai, who was drafted in 2008. Mills followed him a year later in 2009. You can call him a trailblazer. It also makes him something of a cultural ambassador.

"I know I've become a role model for a lot of Australians, not just Indigenous Australians," says Mills, who's taken a seat at

a boardroom table in the hotel's conference room, dressed in black Under Armour gear with a reversed snapback. "I do take a lot of pride in that. I'm very proud of where I come from." That sense of pride is never greater than when Mills plays for his country. "I'm a different beast when I pull on the green and gold," he says.

Identity and pride are themes Mills will return to throughout our chat. Not because of the uniqueness of his own story, remarkable as it is, but because he believes taking pride in who you are can help you dig deeper and drive harder. "The strength and motivation I have now comes entirely from my culture and the people I represent," he says.

Indeed, as Mills sees it, honouring your roots is the starting point for anyone who wants to aim higher and go further than what society, your background, the nay-sayers, and even logic, say you have a right to.

MILLS AND BOOM

Mills was about to take the court against the Toronto Raptors at the AT&T Center in San Antonio when he heard the news about Kobe Bryant's death. "I was in the middle of one of my pregame activation exercises when my strength coach walked up and told us the news. It was devastating," he says softly. Mills and the rest of the players started the game by letting the 24-second clock run out in Bryant's honour. They played the game in a state of shock, he says. "It was so heavy."

Mills and Bryant had some history. Throughout the following week, which

included a trip to LA where he saw the outpouring of tributes to one of the city's greatest sporting icons, Mills found himself reflecting on his personal interactions with Bryant and the way the superstar impacted his career. They'd first met at a practice game before the Beijing Olympics. Mills remembers being shocked that the Lakers shooting guard knew who he was. The pair's paths crossed again a few months later in the US, where they bonded over Mills' broken hand, his first major injury. "He shared with me his experience with a broken hand and how to overcome setbacks, adversity and injuries," Mills says. "How to turn them into positives. How to fuel the fire. How to come back."

The fact that it was Mills' shooting hand made the injury all the more worrisome but Bryant, in his own inimitable way, put the young kid at ease. "I remember him joking, 'I broke my shooting hand and I can still shoot'. Man, I didn't even realise the impact he had on me until I really look back at those times." From that point on, Mills says, whenever they competed, Bryant would always take time to check in and see how he was going. "For no reason, too," he says. "I'm still caught off guard as to why he would even do that because I was just this little Indigenous kid from Australia that really had no business talking to Kobe Bryant."

Recognition from the 'Black Mamba' goes a long way. The thing is, Mills already had his own version of Bryant's famous 'Mamba Mentality' burning inside him. It's something that only gets fully unleashed, he says, when >

"I truly believe I'm a
different beast when I pull
on the green and gold"

the stage and the stakes are at their highest. “For me, that type of competitive mindset is how I play for the Boomers.”

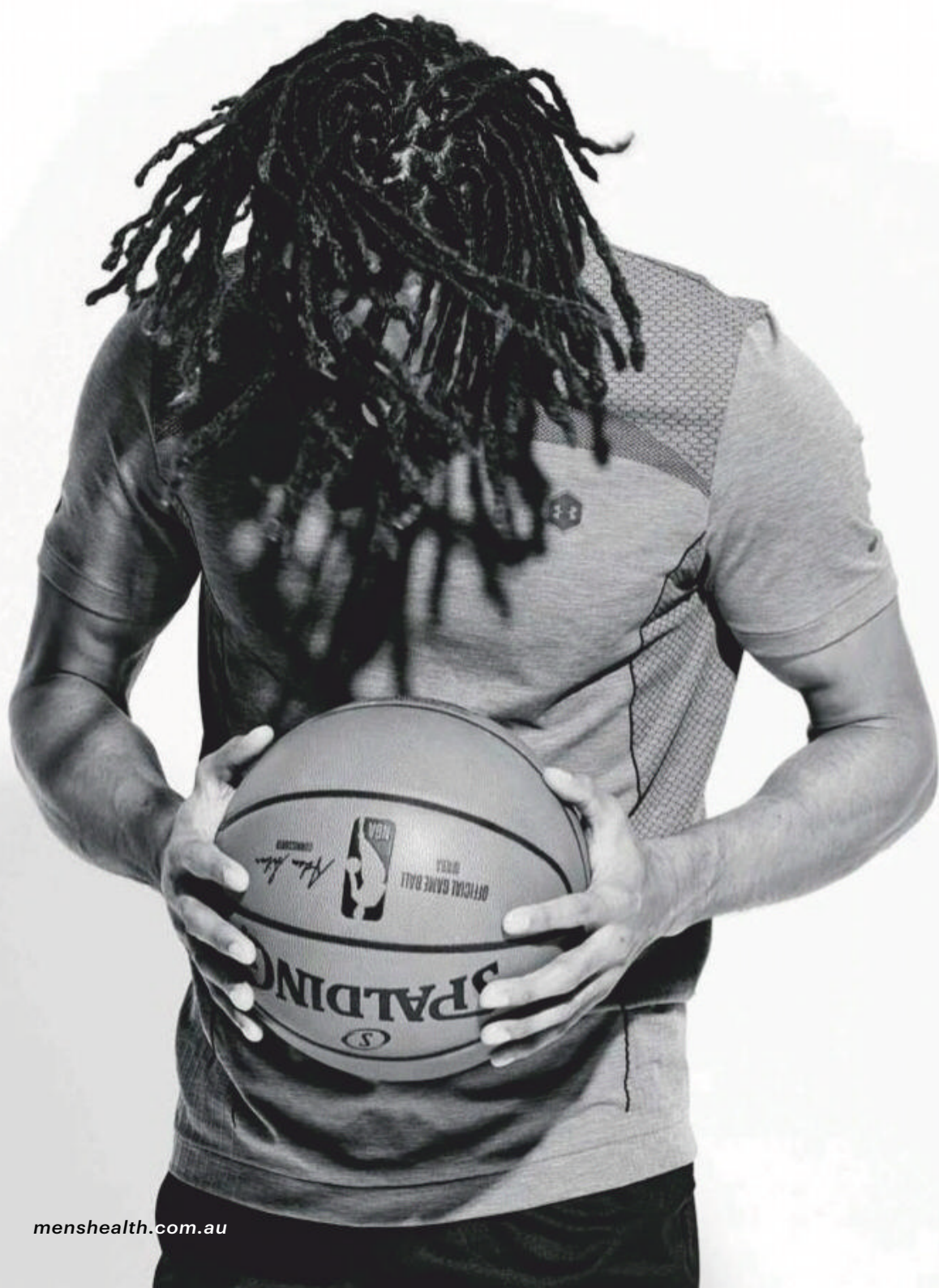
And it’s when things get really tough, say in the last three minutes of an Olympic quarter final, when throats tighten, limbs get heavy and no one really wants the ball, that it truly rises to the surface. In those moments the words that go through Mills’ mind are ‘keep the passion’. “Adversity can lead you to hang your head and lose a bit of that passion and lose focus of where you’re going and why you’re doing it,” he says. “Those are three words you can say to yourself out loud, that remind you of all the reasons why you have that passion in the first place.”

The stats underline Mills’ elevated play in FIBA and Olympic tournaments. In London in 2012 he led all players with a scoring average of 21.2ppg. In Rio he finished second with an average of 21.3ppg, including a 30-point explosion against Team USA, the most ever scored by a Boomer against the Americans. Part of the reason for the

scoring uptick, compared to his output in the NBA, is that Mills is the Boomers’ primary playmaker. Everything runs through him. But mostly, he says, it’s fuelled by the pride he takes in representing his country.

A similar sense of pride and responsibility is also becoming more evident when he turns out for the Spurs, he says. “The more I play for San Antonio, the more of that green and gold feeling I have for that place as well,” he says. “But in saying that, there’s a lot more substance for me when I throw on the green and gold, especially for the Olympics, that I don’t think I’m ever going to have anywhere else. It all comes pouring out when I play for Australia.”

If you thought it might be hard for Mills to go from being a star on the international stage back to his role as a back-up point guard for the Spurs, you’d be right. Mills won’t lie, it’s tough. But it would be even harder, he believes, if he wasn’t playing for a jersey-first club like the Spurs. “I’ve always wanted to be a starting point guard in the NBA,” he admits.



“That was a dream and a goal. But you have to adjust these goals as you go. I happened to find myself in a unique environment at the Spurs with Tim Duncan, Manu Ginóbili and Gregg Popovich as coach. The types of things I learned from these guys have turned me into the person and the player I am today.”

If Mills was looking for a role model for the kind of sacrifice the Spurs required of him, he needed to look no further than Argentine star Ginóbili, who was considered by most experts to be good enough to be a primary option on any other team but willingly took on the important role of sixth man coming off the bench. His four rings amid a two-decade playoff run are a testament to the importance and power of sacrificing for the greater good. “Manu was a leader of the Spurs who quite happily took on that role for the good of



the team,” Mills says. “And that’s what I look to. If Manu can do it, then I can do it.”

As the longest tenured Spur in the current group, Mills’ role on the team has changed in recent years. From being the young gun under the tutelage of icons of the game like Duncan, Tony Parker and Ginóbili, he now sees his role as providing a bridge linking new players with the team’s championship heritage. “I have a really good understanding of the big picture of Spurs culture and what it once was and being able to honour that and help the new generation of players understand what it takes to get to that level,” he says.

With the team currently in danger of missing the playoffs for the first time in over two decades, they need that experience and guidance more than ever. “There’s a lot of situations that we, as an organisation,

“Understand who you are and where you come from”

have never been in over the past 20-odd years,” he says. “I’ve been to the playoffs every year since I’ve been in the league. But I think it gives us something to play for. Having your back against the wall can bring out your best.”

KNOW YOURSELF

Mills and the crew are in a lift on the way from the hotel room to the conference room when the lift stops and Spurs coach Gregg Popovich steps in. Mills raises a cheeky eyebrow at us before he begins discussing dinner options

with his coach and mentor. “Did you get your corner table up the back near the kitchen,” he asks him, possibly mocking his coach for dining alone.

Later he tells me “Pop” was heading to one of the Spurs’ go-to spots in Denver, an upscale Italian restaurant called Tavernetta. “I was a bit jealous,” he says. “I thought I might rock up and he can shout me a meal.”

Sharing meals on the road has been integral in establishing team culture and forging bonds, Mills says. “I think the time you’re able to bond the most with your >



“You have to peel
back layers of an
onion to get to the
core of who I am”

teammates is when you're breaking bread and you get to know each other," he says. "We had a dinner last night in Sacramento where the whole team got together and ate. It was after a pretty tough loss but to have dinner and chat about anything but basketball is important for us as a group."

Of course, the enigmatic Popovich, one of the great characters of American sport, has been largely responsible for developing the Spurs' revered cultural ethos. Famous for giving dry, deadpan interviews to sideline reporters, the 71-year-old's reputation among the Spurs organisation is a little cuddlier. "He was a father figure for those three guys," Mills says of Duncan, Parker and Ginóbili. "I think he's more like a grandfather to me given the age difference."

Popovich has played a major role in Mills' life off the court, providing reassurance and guidance in hard times and showing an understanding and deep and abiding interest in his cultural identity. The coach shocked Mills during the Western Conference finals back in 2014 when he addressed the team on Mabo Day, detailing Mills' great uncle, Eddie Mabo's role as a campaigner for Indigenous rights. "At a time when people were still trying to understand me as an Indigenous Australian, it really caught me off guard that coach Pop knew who Eddie Mabo was and the impact he had on all Australians, not just Indigenous Australians."

Mills is a curiosity to most Americans.

He faces questions about his race and background every single day. "Just walking down the street and meeting someone for the first time, they assume I'm African American by my appearance and then they hear me talk and they're like, 'Where are you from?' Then the stereotypes start. It's almost like you have to peel back layers of an onion before you get to the core of who I am."

He's careful not to judge people. Instead he focuses on educating them. "It's not a good thing or a bad thing," he says. "It's an opportunity for me to educate them on where I'm from and my upbringing. I enjoy it."

The truth is Mills is uniquely equipped for the role. He fully understands the responsibility it carries and the power he has to shape people's perceptions of Indigenous Australians. Which is perhaps why, as great as his exploits on court may be, he's determined his legacy will be built on far more than just dunks and dimes. "I never want to be defined as a basketballer," he says.

There's little danger of that. Mills speaks to broad themes with a wisdom and insight borne of one who's forged a path rather than followed one. "The biggest piece of advice I can give anyone is to understand who you are and never forget where you come from," he says. "Be proud of that, because that, in itself, can take you a long way to achieving your dreams." The thing about Mills? It's pretty clear he knew who he was and exactly what that meant, long before he made the big time. ■



Favourite exercise in the gym?

Leg extensions. The way that I play puts a lot of stress on the tendons. Strengthening my quads has taken a lot of strain off my knees.

Least favourite?

I don't have one. I love the pain that you get from working hard in the gym.

Motivational song?

I like island jams, slow jams, little bit of reggae. Not the kind of stuff you'd think to put on to get pumped up.

Aussie food you miss most?

Fresh fish that I catch with my family.

Toughest opponent?

Steve Nash.

Hero?

My mum. Who I am and who I've grown into today has a lot to do with her and what she's been through.

BOOM TIMES AHEAD:
MILLS IS DETERMINED
TO BREAK THROUGH
FOR A MEDAL IN TOKYO.



MIND THE GAP:
SPIRITUAL YEARNING
CAN LEAD TO LEAPS
OF FAITH... AND
PARTING OF FINANCES.



*\$oul T*ra*ders*

Fake news, discredited experts, broken politics – is it any wonder that many men are rejecting established truths and seeking a higher plane of consciousness? Or that spirituality is becoming a marketable commodity? Will Self examines how altered states became a burgeoning business >

ILLUSTRATION BY STANLEY CHOW

“Does the body rule the mind, or does the mind rule the body? I dunno...”

Back in the day when Morrissey was cleverly – nay, artfully – subversive, rather than merely a reactionary blowhard, I considered this one of the most intelligent lyrics ever to be penned by an English pop star. Because, let’s face it, we really don’t know. Sometimes we are convinced that changing the way we think will change the way we feel, while at other times we’re absolutely certain it’s the physical that takes precedence. Going for a walk or popping a Prozac: both of these commonplace nostrums rest on the assumption that *mens sana* (“a healthy mind”) depends *in corpore sano* (“on a healthy body”) – whether that health be a function of fitness, or the prevention of dopamine being reabsorbed by your synapses.

In the West, the Cartesian position has tended to prevail, so much so that it seems common sense to many that the body and the mind are separate, and that the gauzy stuff that is consciousness bears no discernible relation to the rather more solid – and often irksome – bodily realities. This dichotomy remains enshrined in our medical services, such that mental and physical health are regarded as quite different spheres. Yet, as an Ayurvedic (traditional Indian) doctor who I once consulted pointed out, “Only in the West is ‘psychosomatic’ a sort of insult”.

It’s an insult we’ve all had flung at us – and it usually finds its target, because if there’s one thing we Westerners regard as truly miraculous, it’s our scientifically validated medicine. Every year, there are further advances, whether these be new drugs, new

surgical techniques or such wizardry as the Crispr gene-editing technology, which can be applied to living organisms and promises to eliminate hereditary defects as well as cure diseases. Under such circumstances, to argue that good health depends vitally on breathing regularly or bending and stretching in certain sequences, seems not only perverse but quite possibly a gateway to far more pernicious hocus-pocus, such as crystal dangling, horoscopy and joining a drum circle consisting of similarly flabby-minded fools.

Yet, far from withering away as science advances, these alternative methods of achieving health and well-being continue to burgeon. Moreover, contrary to men’s cherished (and utterly absurd) vision of ourselves as the more rational moiety of the human species, we’ve become some of the most enthusiastic new adopters of these old ways. A means of understanding this could be to invert the science fiction writer Arthur C Clarke’s dictum, “Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic”, and acknowledge that in a world where such innovations have become commonplace, magic starts to appear credible once again.

DAYDREAM BELIEVERS

I’m certainly not immune to the lure of wellness and mindfulness. But does that mean I’m about to start believing in the Loch Ness Monster? A couple of years ago, I went on a three-day mindfulness retreat on Holy Isle, off the coast of Scotland, where the Samye Ling

Buddhist monastery has its northern outpost. This trip marked a distinct increase in my engagement with such practices. Since then, there’s been a fair bit of yoga and meditation.

I’m a man nearing the end of my sixth decade – a man who, to put it in euphemistic terms that you will surely understand, has lived a life. Things are starting to malfunction. I was diagnosed with a myeloid blood disease in 2011 and, while the symptoms (and the side effects of the medication) aren’t that egregious, it has synergised with the ageing process to make everything physical feel just that bit more difficult. Giving up tobacco and all other nicotine delivery systems and becoming a vegetarian are things that not only ageing men do. But there seems an added poignancy to chasing vitality at my time of life, when you can see it ebbing back down the shore, as the very tide of your life goes . . . out.

When I was on Holy Isle, the Buddhist monk who conducted the sessions gathered us together on the beach and asked us to choose a pebble. Then he told us to imagine that the stone we’d picked up contained within it, mightily compressed, all the woes that afflicted us, whether these be psychic or physical. Once he felt certain that we’d performed this mental exercise, the monk told us to hurl the stone of misfortune into the sea.

I confess it was at this point that my own mindfulness – hitherto fresh and optimistic – curdled into a head full of bad attitude. “No way!” I expostulated internally. “No way am I going to surrender all my resentments and aches

\$piritual Healing

NOT ALL MYSTICAL-
SOUNDING REMEDIES ARE
WITHOUT MERIT – BUT WHICH
ARE SUPPORTED BY SCIENCE?

1 BREATHWORK

The sell: These simple, focused breathing exercises offer time for self-reflection and help you connect with your body's innate wisdom. Improved oxygen flow also boosts energy and, depending on whom you ask, creativity.

The science: Deep (that is, diaphragmatic) breathing has been shown to improve focus and emotional control, reports *Frontiers in Psychology*. Epiphanies not guaranteed.

Woo-woo points: ●●●●●

2 SINGING BOWLS

The sell: When played, these Tibetan bowls reverberate with a deep, rich tone, which promotes relaxation, reduces pain and rebalances your body's energy systems.

The science: *The Journal of Evidence-Based Integrative Medicine* linked singing bowl meditation to enhanced well-being, but that's likely just the benefit of . . . er, meditation. A soothing Spotify soundtrack would probably do the same job.

Woo-woo points: ●●●●●

and pains so easily! Damn it! Some of my misfortunes cost me a great deal of money – way more than could be effectively amortised by a fusillade of stones, let alone a single throw.”

But really, the monk was a positive beacon of low-cost sincerity when set beside the obvious boondoggles that are coming to typify what we must, perforce, call an “industry” (worth an estimated \$43bn worldwide last year). Gwyneth Paltrow's *Goop* website had to settle a misleading advertising suit because it had claimed its vaginal egg crystals had the power to regulate menstrual cycles and balance hormones. Obviously, men are unlikely to be shoving such things where the sun don't shine, but Paltrow is just one of the new breed of mind-bender entrepreneurs catering to the newly credulous.

Moreover, her nostrums are gender-neutral enough to attract men as well as women – the kind of men who need to be told by “psychological astrologer” Jennifer Freed and “mindfulness teacher” Deborah Eden Tull to trust their instincts rather than respond to a sense of “false urgency”. After all, such false urgencies might lead us, for example, to buy a “Large Standard Singing Bowl Set” from *Goop*'s shopping channel. Though, at \$348, it is surely a bargain, when you consider it contains “everything you need to aid your meditation practice in one beautiful bundle”.

HEAD WINDS

Personally, I'd rather attend Brothers Breathwork, which styles itself as a “male-focused breathwork group”. Not that I'm that familiar with such huffing-for-health, but I've done enough pranayama (breath control) during yoga and meditation to know one thing about it: in common with inhaling or ingesting psychoactive substances, it can get you pretty damn high. This was a point I made early on in my discussion with Hannah Goodman, who founded Grounded Life, the outfit behind this group work. Needless to say, she was

careful to play such frivolity down.

“People do have that experience,” she told me, “and we're certainly open to the insights gained from experiences of ayahuasca and other forms of plant medicine.” However, getting monged is one thing – breathwork quite another.

Goodman trained as a yoga teacher and then became involved in Holotropic Breathwork, a therapeutic technique that was developed by psychiatrists Stanislav and Christina Grof in the 1970s, when the criminalisation of LSD meant that they could no longer use it with their patients. Goodman was involved in doing both mixed breathwork and women's breathwork, when one day she had an epiphany.

“I was watching television when I saw a statistic about male suicides, which at that time were running at about 85 a week [in the UK],” she recalls. Shocked and wanting to help, she began developing workshops in which she could “hold a space for guys to come and breathe together”. She concedes that there can be a lot of screams and shouts when the heavy breathing begins (and, it's worth noting, some authorities think these techniques amount to little more than hyperventilation) but, nevertheless, these constitute what she calls “strong sessions”.

I was interested in whether Goodman felt that her work helped to alleviate the problems associated with what has come to be known as “toxic masculinity”, and whether there had been a rise in men seeking help since the #MeToo movement got under way. “I think both men and women need to hold space for each other,” she told me, “as partners and as equals.”

With older men, Goodman felt that there was occasionally an “imbalance”, a function of intergenerational trauma, presumably passed down from their yet more poisonous forefathers. I should have thought that some of the most toxic masculinity to be found would be in the boardroom and, indeed, Grounded Life offers sessions that are specifically aimed at anxious >

“In a world where innovation is commonplace, magic starts to appear credible again”

“I don’t want to escape the prison of manhood with a crack team of the usual little green suspects”

executives in stressful occupations.

I couldn’t help wondering if we really wanted some of these executives to be de-stressed and calmed down. After all, much of what their businesses do would be seen as positively harmful by those who follow the spiritual path that lies behind many of these practices. “Of course,” Goodman told me, “I want to know who I’m talking to, I’m interested in the individual . . . and I don’t want to support anything unethical.”

Maybe so, but she seemed flummoxed when I asked her whether she had ever considered doing some sort of due diligence with her clients, and instead went on to discuss working in Ubud, the cultural centre of Bali, with “burned-out CEOs who have reached the top and not found it fulfilling”. This hardly seemed that spiritual to me – more on the Goopy side of things.

WOUNDED TO WARRIOR

Someone who would presumably feel the same way about alternative therapies being hijacked by the plutocrats is Russell Brand. In recent years, the wild-haired comedian and actor has turned his attention to good works. First, it was politics, with his book *Revolution* and his YouTube series devoted to social justice. Then, in 2017, he published *Recovery: Freedom from Our Addictions*, which aims to apply the insights he gained from practising the 12 steps of the so-called anonymous fellowships (Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, etc) to the problems everyone faces in our contemporary consumerist world.

According to Brand, “The sages are right: the material world is an illusion and its treasures all too temporal. That doesn’t mean you have to live as a monk, although that is one way out of it. It just means you can never quench your spiritual craving through material means.”

I caught up with him through the very material (if also, to me, at least, still magical) means of a long-distance phone call. The aspirant guru had dropped into a meditation workshop

outside Monterey. As we chatted, Brand expostulated each time a woodpecker flew past, and I couldn’t help thinking, churlishly, that I’d be a good deal more chilled if I was in some western Californian Eden, rather than the purgatory of south London. So, I wondered, is this new direction also a new departure for Brand? “I see it as an evolution,” the familiar Essex tones wheedled through the ether. “It’s all about reaching out and helping people, not necessarily just getting drawn into controversy.” Brand has been famously candid about his own addiction issues over the years – from drugs to sex and back again, and again. Was the aim to detoxify the whole world a function of his having become a father? With two young daughters, anyone might go on a drive to remove all the sharp objects from the entire cosmos.

Brand was quick to disabuse me of this. “I think I needed some of this sort of understanding prior to my relationship,” he said. “I don’t think I could have become a father without doing that work.” For him, “the work” has consisted of applying the 12 steps – basically, a set of principles and practices encouraging self-abnegation and embodying Christian virtues – first to his own troubled psyche and now to the wider world.

“Consumerism is addiction at a collective level,” Brand confidently asserted. “While we’re always checking our profiles on social media, it’s a compulsion.” You don’t actually have to be under Waterloo Bridge cradling a bottle of Night Train to join in the new Brand ethos, but just like the anonymous fellowships he takes his cue from, he is also interested in a full-blown spiritual awakening. “It’s integral to what I’m talking about,” he talked at me, “that we all recognise ourselves as human beings that are flawed. It’s the only way we’ll obtain any relief.”

Brand went on to give me an example of how he’d “taken his own inventory” (the 12-steps term for a sort of morality check) that very morning after a bit of argy-bargy in the jam

3 SWEAT LODGES

The sell: Derived (or appropriated, if you like) from Native American culture, these ceremonies promise to purify your body and heal your soul.

The science: Regular sauna use is linked to multiple heart and brain benefits, though we recommend that you cap your sessions at 20 minutes. Sweating to the point of delirium in a field, when handled improperly, can only end badly.

Woo-woo points: ●●●●●



4 AYAHUASCA

The sell: When drunk as a tea, this hallucinogenic plant can instantly deliver the sort of revelations you’d achieve after a year in therapy.

The science: A study in *Psychopharmacology* found that it reduced depressive feelings and improved problem solving. More research is needed before we understand why.

Woo-woo points: ●●●●●



5 HEALING CRYSTALS

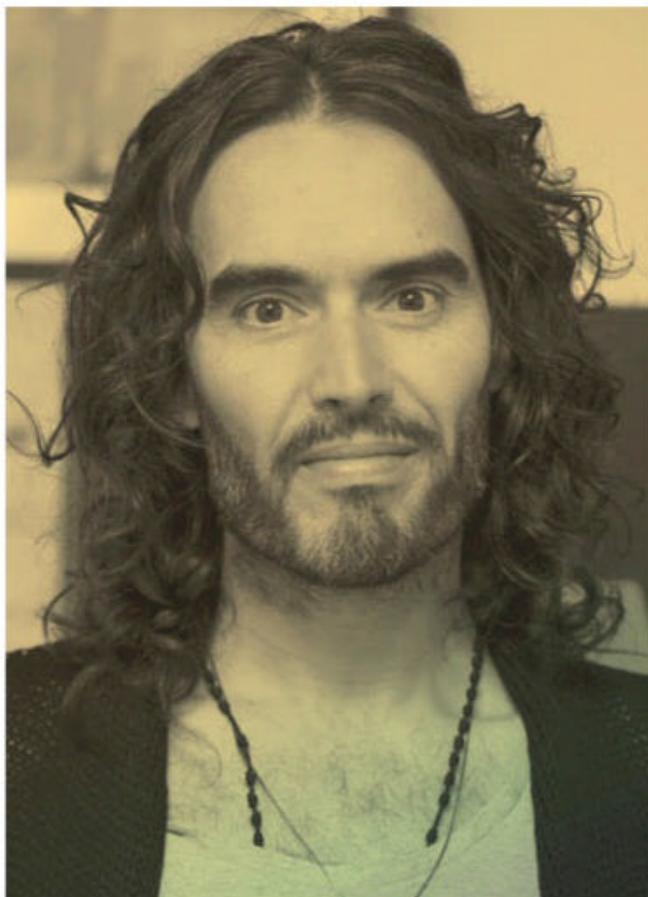
The sell: Different crystals “vibrate” at different frequencies. Their purported benefits range from improving energy and confidence to supporting fertility.

The science: No study supports any of these claims, but research backs up crystals’ placebo effect. So, if you believe that carrying a quartz stone in your pocket will give you energy, you’ll probably feel better for it.

Woo-woo points: ●●●●●



LOST AND FOUND IN
INNER SPACE:
CLOCKWISE FROM
BELOW, BRAND,
GOODMAN AND ELSEY.



jar, and this led him, once again, to conclude: “From the wound comes the salve.” I didn’t doubt Brand’s sincerity in all this for a moment. Nonetheless, confronted with humility that’s being offered to me at the seductive price point of \$16.99, I did have to ask him if, given the journey he was on, he didn’t think flogging books with his own face on them wasn’t, well, a little de trop? This summoned a bit of self-justification from the aspirant altruist – “I love connecting to people . . . I’m a raconteur and a communicator, that’s what I do . . .” – who then went on to speak of the sort of “cynicism” that might lie behind my critique.

Fair enough, I know I can be a cynical fellow. I also agree with Brand that “masculinity” as an achieved state “is a prison”. Of course, for an old lag like me, who was trying to escape this jail through the free use of major psychotropic drugs by the 1970s, his talk of “interfacing with higher consciousness” – which is, indeed, the dimension our phone call next soared into – can seem not only too much but also a little passé. Still, he’s only echoing an upsurge of such mystical hoodoo on the web. One of the most popular of the new New Age podcasters

is Joe Rogan, a bull-necked American in a baseball cap, whose semi-articulate rants about the little green men he’s seen under the influence of dimethyltryptamine seem to me about as enlightened as a 20W bulb in a locked gents bog at the end of the cosmos.

JOURNEY PLANNERS

Personally, I don’t want to escape the prison of manhood with a crack team of the usual little green suspects. But I do have great sympathy for men who are troubled by their identity and all the social, cultural and emotional assumptions that go with it. Sympathy for them, and for Eddy Elsey, a young man of 28 who’s already done a four-year apprenticeship to a shaman and now runs an outfit called Street Spirituality that holds “masculinity immersion” weekends. These comprise tribe-life experiences, including a wilderness initiation and fire workshop with mountain leader Huw Mackin, through a dandelion ceremony with plant healer Neil Kirwan, to a sweat lodge ceremony with a shaman.

Elsey conceded that what had brought him to healing – like Brand – were his own troubles. “I suffered

chronic anxiety, panic attacks,” he said. “I felt I was at the mercy of my own thoughts. I was mixed up in the rave scene for quite a while, and while ecstasy helped me in one way – by opening my heart up to other people – it also left me with a lot of problems.” Elsey went into therapy, then trained – like Goodman – as a yoga instructor, before finding the aforementioned shaman, with whom he began “working with the spirits of nature, working with the drum and with psychedelics”. Elsey told me that his own sense of a negative masculine identity had been a big factor in his (hopefully) heroic journey. “I looked at the older men in my life and thought: I don’t want to be like you,” he told me.

Again, it might be comfortable to dismiss Elsey as just another *recherche* seeker, looking for his own future in a cultural rear-view mirror. But his sincerity shone through what he was saying, not least because he was keen to stress that he was “just a kid from north London”, a kid who still has a “group of mates who go to Spurs, some of whom work in the City, and who are good blokes, really . . .”

It’s onto this rather suburban background that we need to cast the flickering firelight of the traditional peoples whose cosmological ideas Elsey is attracted to, in common with those such as Robert Bly, whose book *Iron John* kicked off the whole men’s movement.

And I confess I’m not quite sure Elsey (or anyone else) can square this particular drumming circle: between social contexts in which who you are is a given and those where everyone feels there’s a smorgasbord of available identities from which they can pick and choose. Just as you pick and choose which analgesic you want to buy over the counter – or whether a gin and tonic is your tippie or some rhythmic heavy breathing.

I appreciated Elsey’s conviction, as I say. Yet, just as I can’t really see how a weekend’s worth of tribal activities can make people who work in finance swap trading for a more sustainable lifestyle, so I can’t imagine a read of Brand’s book will purge us of our compulsions or that huffing and puffing with Goodman will truly reconnect us with our vital being. The confusion here is between a mere palliative and a true philosophy. But, hey, that’s where the real money’s always been – just ask your doctor. ■

27

APPS THAT WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE IN 2020

Your phone has put the global hive mind at your fingertips, so why squander your storage on face swaps and unused messenger services? These game-changing downloads are programmed to transform your health, wealth and fitness by the gigabyte. Your smartphone is about to get a whole lot smarter >

BY KIERAN ALGER ILLUSTRATION BY PETER CROWTHER

80

the number of apps
the average person
has installed – but
only nine get fired
up daily



Key:



LIFESTYLE
CHEATS



MENTAL
MUSCLE



NUTRITION
HACKS



TRAINING
UPGRADE



CASH
SAVINGS



APPY DAYS: DIGITAL
SELF-HELP COULD BE
AN INVESTMENT IN
YOUR FUTURE.

38
minutes of app-based
meditation per week
can reduce stress,
according to Arizona
State University



CALM

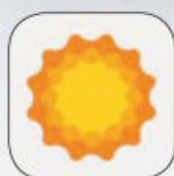
We'll assume
that, by now,

you're fairly clued up on the benefits of meditation and mindfulness. But scheduling effective timeouts between school runs, conference calls and workouts will test anyone's patience. With more than 100 guided sessions for stress-busting, anxiety management and enhancing focus, Calm is your co-pilot to the land of chill, and it can also help you get to sleep. Specially selected bedtime tales narrated by the likes of Matthew McConaughey (really) and Stephen Fry will coax you into a higher state of subconsciousness. (calm.com)



AIRVISUAL

Bad news for cardio commuters: regularly sucking in city smog damages your lungs, heart and brain, and can trigger inflammation, curbing many of the positive effects you're chasing. But there's a way to swerve fummy runs and rides without wearing a Bane mask. This tracker offers detailed data on the air quality in your area, plus you can add 'places' you want to track, such as work or home. You can set up push notifications to alert you to the air quality daily. Plus, it will tell you whether to keep your windows closed or avoid that outdoor run. (airvisual.com)



NOOM

Even for those who food-prep religiously on Sunday nights, the best-laid nutritional plans can fall apart when life gets real. Whatever your nutritional or weight-loss goals might be, this app uses a psychological approach to "trick" your body into building healthy habits. Rated by the University of Sydney's Charles Perkins Centre as the app most likely to change behaviour and assist weight loss, it could be the key to achieving your fighting weight and staying there. (noom.com)

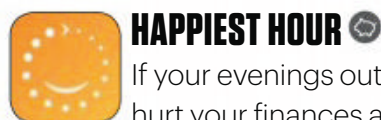


SPARK

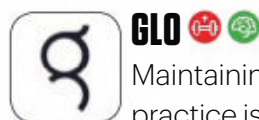
Email was supposed to make our lives more efficient but, in reality, it tends to be about as productive as debating Australia Day. Though clicking "select all", then "delete" might offer temporary catharsis, what if you miss that urgent note from your boss? Spark works with your go-to email app to flag up messages it identifies as important, place non-urgent mail in a holding pen and block annoying repeat mailers. It also allows you to schedule emails to be sent later, so with a bit of pre-planning, your boss might think you're working hard at 6am. It's time to take back control of your inbox. (sparkmailapp.com)


ROWITH

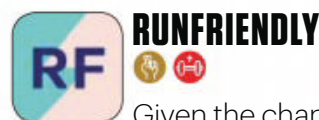
What Peloton did for your spin session, Rowith can do for your dry-land rows. The app, launching soon, transforms your monotonous ergo training into inspiring full-body workouts, with audio-guided coaching and tips from gold-medal Olympic rowers, such as Steve Redgrave. Choose from a deep pool of sessions that adapt as you progress from oar amateur to Boat Race hopeful. You can even challenge friends to really spice up your time in the hot seat. (rowith.com)


HAPPIEST HOUR

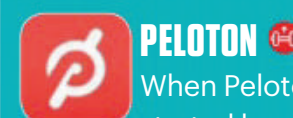
If your evenings out hurt your finances as much as your head, the next round's on Happiest Hour. This app uses your location to identify happy hours and meal-deals in pubs and bars in your vicinity. Whether you're after food, booze or coffee, it will list places in your immediate proximity, along with the best deals. Plus, you can save your favourite locations so you've always got places up your sleeve. A great way to discover new watering holes, it's also comprehensive enough that you'll rarely break your budget or go thirsty. (thehappiesthour.com)


GLO

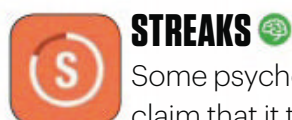
Maintaining daily yoga practice is laudable, but not everyone has 90 minutes to spare posing to pan pipes. Especially if you expend most of your energy worrying about the sniggers going on behind your (inflexible) back. Glo is your solution. It offers thousands of yoga, Pilates and meditation sessions, promising to improve your mental state, posture and mobility. Plus, you can save up lessons to use offline. You can "happy baby" from the comfort of your own home. (glo.com)


RUNFRIENDLY

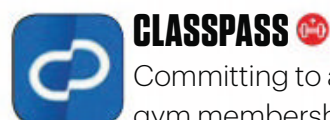
Given the chance, most of us would convert the dead time during our commute into a daily workout. But having nowhere to freshen up makes cardio commutes (and lunch-hour sprints) a sweaty thumbs down. RunFriendly is a bit like Airbnb for showers. From gyms to hotels, it uncovers sites that let you wash away your efforts on a one-off basis. And none of your colleagues will set eyes on your Lycra. (app.runfriendly.com)


PELOTON

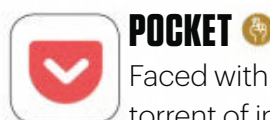
When Peloton first started beaming real-time fitness classes into our homes, it reinvented the (stationary) wheel. But while the bike's price tag might keep it on your wish list, the app offers a more affordable, no less revolutionary option. Download it to access all the gut-busting goodness of 20 live daily classes, led by the brand's "rock star" coaches, along with a library of on-demand workouts for cycling, running, outdoor fitness and more. You can put the money you save on boutique bootcamps toward finally purchasing that bike. (onepeloton.com)


STREAKS

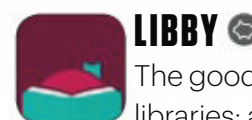
Some psychologists claim that it takes 21 days for a new habit to form; others argue that it takes closer to two months. Either way, sticking to anything for that long can be tough, whether it's flossing your teeth, hitting your step count or forgoing your post-lunch trip to the vending machine. Streaks is a self-improvement coach that helps you ingrain these healthy behaviours by logging the good stuff you get done – or bad stuff you deftly avoid. Create up to 12 tasks that you want to make part of your routine, then mark them off as you complete them. (streaksapp.com)


CLASSPASS

Committing to a single gym membership, fixed to just one club and location, feels... well, a bit 2019. Make this the year you untether your fitness goals. ClassPass allows you to book workouts in 20,000 venues around the world. A flexible monthly fee unlocks gym access, group fitness classes and even recovery treatments such as cryotherapy. You can search easily by location and activity and, when you can't make it out, you can stream classes. Consider it poly-gymory. (classpass.com)


POCKET

Faced with the daily torrent of information online, it's easy to lose track of what you actually want to dive into, from informative news articles to *Men's Health* workouts. Pocket lets you curate a reading list by saving all the stuff you want to look at later in one place. You can stash media from any platform or app, and file it all using lists, so you'll never forget if you saved it for work or your WhatsApp chat. It's available offline, too, so it won't eat up all of your valuable data. (getpocket.com)


LIBBY

The good thing about libraries: a vast supply of books to read at zero cost. The bad thing about libraries: making time in your day to collect and return all those books, while navigating rushed mornings and 5pm closing times. Libby has updated the process for the 2020s. The app opens up a smartphone portal to all the free ebooks that your local libraries have to lend, which you can download and read offline on your bus home. It also offers graphic novels, and audio books for those who have reached podcast saturation. And no late fees. (meet.libbyapp.com) >



VIVINO

Life's too short to drink bad wine, but as for what constitutes "bad", that's in the eye of the glass holder. Uncertain of your tastes? Crowd source: simply point your phone camera at the bottle in front of you and this smartphone sommelier will analyse the label and send you an instant report on how highly it's been rated by other users who have popped that particular cork. Plus, you can use it to scan, source and order wines that you'd like to try again. Or, you can just regurgitate the expert reviews and sound like you know your Malbec from your Merlot. (vivino.com)



PARKING PIN

Like a smug friend with an unerring memory, Parking Pin makes a note of where you've left your car before you've even asked it to, coming to your rescue in those "Oh, shit..." moments. It works with Apple's location services to pinpoint your spot as soon as you put the brakes on, then provides you with a map and directions. It also keeps tabs on how much time has elapsed since you parked and notifies you 15 minutes before your slot expires, even in the absence of signal or Wi-Fi. Which also provides a convenient excuse should you need to exit an awkward conversation. (everydayodyssey.com)



OLIO

Every year in Australia, we bin 3.5 million tonnes of food, placing a huge strain on the planet, not to mention your weekly grocery bill. Food-sharing app Olio reduces waste by linking users who overestimated their appetites (or bought a four-pack of avocados two days before their road trip) with those looking for extra ingredients. Just snap a photo, set a safe place for collection and use the in-app ratings to filter recipients. (olioex.com)



FOODSWITCH

Developed by The George Institute for Global Health this app could be the key to unlocking healthier food choices. Just scan the barcode of a food item to get a comprehensive breakdown of that product's nutritional profile. Results are presented using either the 'Health Star Rating', which scores a food between 0.5 stars to 5 stars, or as colour-coded 'traffic light' icons that show key nutrients as green (good), amber (so-so), and red (bad). The best part? It also offers a list of similar foods that are healthier alternatives. (foodswitch.com.au)



DELIVERIES

With the supposed convenience of online shopping comes the cat-and-mouse game of ensuring that you're at home when your order arrives – or trying to work out which of the neighbours now has your dismantled home gym package in their hallway. But you needn't spend all your WFH brownie points on 12-hour timeslots. This app collates info on your deliveries from Amazon, DHL, Yodel, TNT and others, then lets you track their whereabouts. And don't worry: it won't tell your boss that there's no need for you to stay at home all day. (deliveries.orr.de)



BLINKIST

Pop science and self-help titles are now shifting in record numbers. But with new "must-reads" seeming to hit the shelves every hour, many life-changing ideas will inevitably pass you by. Blinkist's app abridges the gap. Its experts distil the key concepts of best-selling non-fiction books into bite-sized text and audio files, giving you the elevator pitch for the latest on leadership, health and nutrition. Consider it a Sparknotes for self-improvement. (blinkist.com)



OTTER

A recent study of 19 million meetings estimated that we waste \$87bn per year attending poorly run huddles. And if there's one thing that sucks up time and stifles productivity more than a flabby meeting, it is writing up the notes. Otter can't help you with the former, but the auto-dictation app transcribes your colleagues' chatter in real time to create searchable notes with speaker ID and key phrases. Useful when you're arguing over who should be credited with big ideas. (otter.ai)



ZWIFT

Another pioneer in remote training for riders and runners alike, Zwift transforms tedious turbo rides and treadmill slogs into challenging, social sweat sessions. Pair any Bluetooth-enabled treadmill or static bike to the app and power your avatar around the roads of six virtual worlds, including a futuristic New York. There are more than 1000 workouts to choose from, plus around 300 group races each day, giving you the chance to dish the dirt as they eat your (pixel) dust. (zwift.com)



CHOOSE TAP

You've kicked your bottled-water habit to save the planet, but walking around thirsty messes with your body: even a 1 per cent drop in hydration is enough to disrupt cognitive function and lower mood. This app helps you find drinking bubblers and water taps in more than 1600 locations so you'll never go thirsty. Just tap your phone to see the nearest tap, then guzzle and go. (choosetap.com.au)



SLEEPSCORE

A bad night's sleep can wreak havoc on your wellbeing, so there's no shortage of products that purport to help you nod off. But for something cheap, contactless and ready at the tap of a screen, this app is one purchase you don't need to, well, sleep on. The "world's most accurate sleep app" uses your phone's microphone to monitor your breathing rate and body movements, then presents a detailed breakdown of your sleep stages, along with a nightly score. Rest easy. (sleepscore.com)





FOREST

Buying an app to cut down on your phone use feels akin to discussing your Veganuary ambitions over a 400g steak. But trimming back your screen time becomes a simple game with Forest. The next time you're faced with a dull task that demands unwavering attention – whether going through your expenses or proofreading a report – open up the app and plant a virtual tree. If you leave the app too soon, the tree dies. You'll know you've become a monk-like master of concentration when you've grown your own woodlands. (forestapp.cc)



FREESTYLE LIBRE

Health tech is becoming more personalised by the day and this app takes targeted nutrition to the next level. Using data captured by a non-invasive blood glucose monitor, it shows how your blood sugar responds to what you eat, whether that's bread, biscuits or beer. The app also indicates how your blood sugar is trending, plus your eight-hour history. (freestylelibre.com.au)



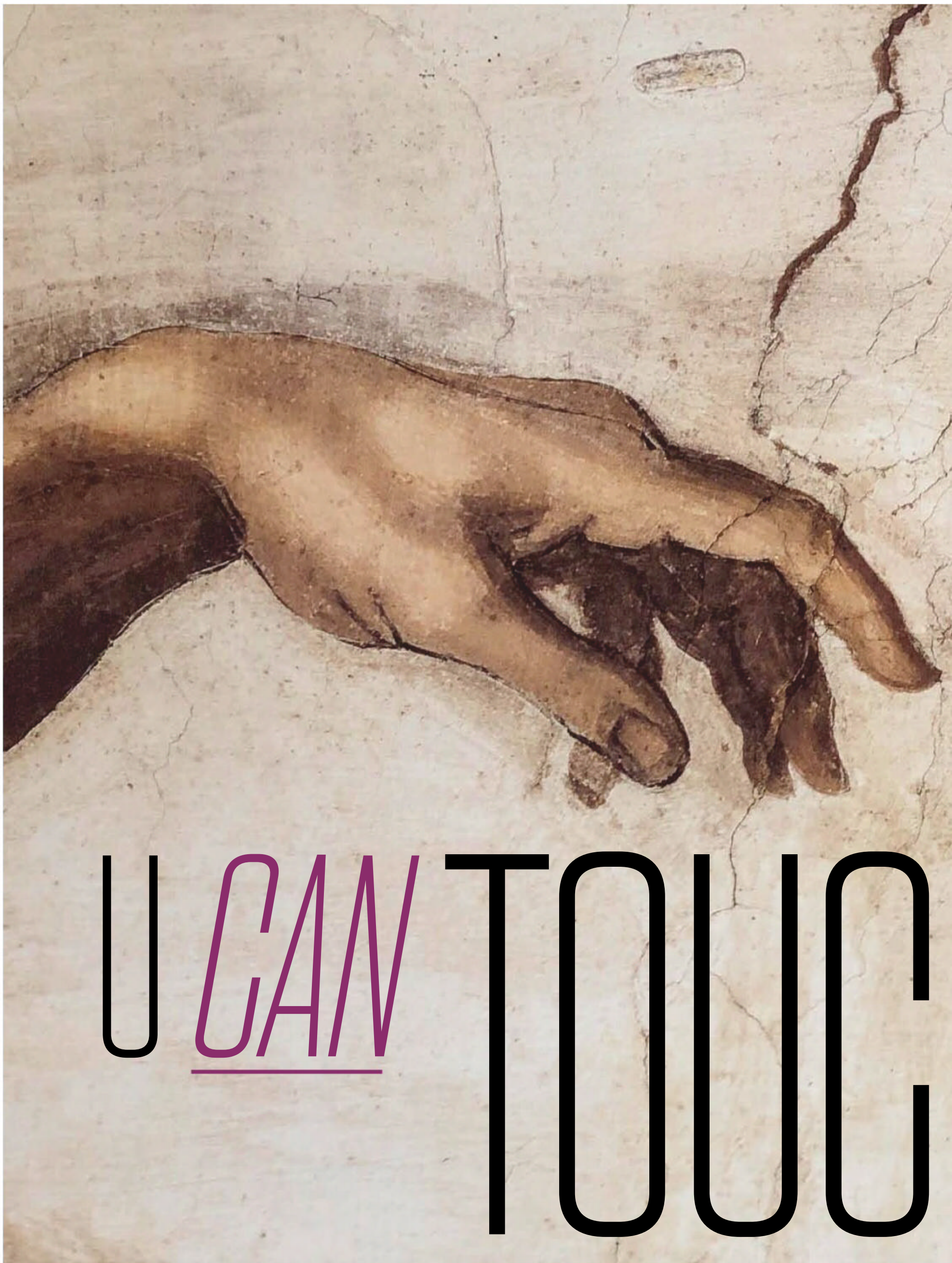
WHAT3WORDS

GPS tech might be one of the world's great game changers, but it has its limits. Generally, it can't take you to places unnamed or unmapped, or find you the best entrance to a station, or locate your pals when you take a wrong turn on a weekend trail run. This app divides the world into 3m blocks and assigns each one a unique three-word address, so you can properly pinpoint a location. (what3words.com)



THE WORLD'S FITTEST APP

If you've made it your mission to get leaner, quicker, fitter and/or stronger, this app is your 2020 action plan. Created by athlete-adventurer Ross Edgley and the experts at *MH*, it has four exhaustive 12-week training programs, each tailored to your goal. Videos help you nail the moves with proper form, and the plans knit them all together – all for half the price of a PT session. Transform your body into an instrument – not an ornament. (menshealth.com/uk) ■



As a man in Western society there's a good chance you're touch deprived. Not only is that bad for your physical and mental health, it could mean you're missing out on a source of connection that strikes at the heart of what it means to be human

BY BEN JHOTY

H THIS

IT'S AROUND the 23-second mark during a hug with a stranger that I open my eyes and wonder what the hell I'm doing. I've met up with Amanda Souza, a 32-year-old Brazilian cuddle therapist at a bar in Bondi. After a brief chat about her profession, Souza and I are putting theory into practice.

As we stand there, two strangers locked in a fervent embrace as the bar's midweek patrons sip their pale ales, I'm conscious that this is probably the first hug I've had in a long time where I feel uninhibited. Most of the time when a friend or colleague wraps their arms around me, my natural reaction is to stiffen. My arms become lead rods, my torso armour-plated. If it's a female, I'm conscious of not betraying any signs of genuine affection, lest I be seen as a >

creep. On the rare occasions that it's a male that I'm awkwardly entangled with, I'm even more restrained. We'll slap each other on the back as we hug, attempting perhaps to reinforce our masculinity and douse any suspicions about our sexuality.

But with Souza I don't have to worry about how our hug will be construed. Her status as a professional hugger removes much of the social awkwardness that often accompanies this intimate act, allowing me to focus on the hug itself. I close my eyes again and feel Souza's warm hands moving tenderly across my back. As we stand there, the noise of idle chatter and clinking glasses humming around us, it dawns on me that I don't want this hug to end. I feel like our souls are engaged in some kind of tactile communion. I feel her hair on my earlobe, a sensation that causes my dendrites to fire, oxytocin to spike and serotonin to soar. It feels wonderful. I feel anxieties and concerns leeching out of me. I feel . . . actually that's it. Feeling, it turns out, is an end in itself.

Reluctantly I loosen my embrace. Souza does the same. We look at each other and smile. We have shared something special, elemental even. I'm just not sure what.

"You go to a massage therapist to massage your body," says Souza, who launched her business, About Love, two years ago. "Cuddle therapy is a massage for your heart."

It's a beautiful, figurative way to describe what should actually be a rather ordinary human interaction. The problem for many men is that the hug and other acts of spontaneous, platonic affection are so loaded with external baggage – #MeToo, homophobia – and internal anxieties – shyness, social awkwardness, self-consciousness – that they've taken on a semi-spiritual aura they may not truly deserve.

Ask yourself how often, outside of romantic relationships, you touch other people? Sure, you might shake hands with colleagues, backslap friends and even jump on your teammate when he scores a goal. But these fleeting, socially-sanctioned forms of touch are largely superficial displays of affection. Prolonged, meaningful touch with women, and certainly with fellow males, is practically taboo.

That has repercussions you may not have considered. Studies show touch can bolster your immune system, lower



LIP SERVICE: POST-WAR CELEBRATIONS SAW SOCIETAL NORMS TEMPORARILY RELAXED.

stress, decrease aggression and even boost athletic performance. It can also strengthen bonds, reinvigorate relationships, allay loneliness and, in some cases, transform lives. The benefits are all right there waiting for you, tantalisingly close. Close enough to well ... you know what.

TOUCHY SUBJECT

There was a time when touch played a central role in all our day-to-day lives. As an infant you couldn't rely on words to communicate with your parents. Instead, you had to rely on primal means – crying and touching – to express your needs and navigate your world.

Sadly, growing up means becoming civilised, adhering to societal norms and acknowledging social conventions. For most men it also means, look, but don't touch. "Usually there's a lot of touch when we're little," says Ros Knight, president of the Australian Psychological Society. "We hold babies a lot, we play with them. There's a lot of physicality that over time decreases. But touch always signifies connection. It always signifies security and reassurance."

Just how important touch is in infancy has been documented in studies on orphans deprived of tactile affection from their care givers. Not only was their cognitive development impaired but they also developed severe psychological problems. Similarly, premature babies benefit enormously when they're taken out of their incubators to receive skin contact with their mothers.

In adulthood touch retains an important role in our physical and mental wellbeing. It's just that for some people it's harder to access. "It's a basic human need that has to be met somehow," says Knight. "But it's always trickier for adults who are single or if they've grown up in a culture where touch is less okay."

You can count Australia and indeed, most Western countries, as societies where touch is more regulated and boundaries regarding physical contact more rigid. One of the reasons Souza was drawn to cuddle therapy was that upon arriving in Australia five years ago, she was struck by how little people here touched each other compared to her native Brazil. "If you compare it with Brazil, everyone is cold," she says.

Such comparisons may accord tactility a certain exoticness but at

"Prolonged, meaningful touch with females, and fellow males, is taboo"

a biological level, touch's functions are largely utilitarian. A vast array of receptors in our skin allows us to explore and react to the physical properties of our environment, distinguishing between minute variations in stimuli to determine what is hard, soft, hot, cold, warm. What causes pain, what produces irritation, what elicits pleasure. As humdrum as that might sound, though, contact with other surfaces also triggers marked physiological responses that are anything but.

"If you move the skin you stimulate pressure receptors and that basically stimulates a relaxation response," says Dr Tiffany Field, director of the University of Miami's Touch Research Institute, who in a 40-year career has conducted over 100 studies on touch therapy. "Your heart rate and blood pressure decrease, brain waves change in the direction of theta waves and from there stress hormones like cortisol are decreased. This increases natural killer cell activity targeting bacteria, viruses and cancer cells. Ultimately you end up with better health."

Intriguingly, you don't even need to touch another human to trigger this cascade of positive effects, Field says. "The same kind of effects happen in yoga and fast walking. The key is the movement of the skin."

But by touching another human being you open up a whole range of potential psychological benefits. Inevitably, you also introduce a host of complications.

"Of course, it's a form of communication as well," says Field, citing a study from DePauw University in the US, showing that it's possible to decode distinct emotions through touch alone. "I don't think we use touch that way too much because we're such a touch-averse society," she says, adding that increasing digitisation is only further reducing opportunities for physical connection. "We're very reluctant to touch other people

unless they're very familiar to us."

Like other forms of communication, context is crucial to interpreting touch, even if at a neurological level the same mechanical levers are at work. "At the level of sensory signals there isn't much difference, but interpretation is all in the brain, which might lead to very different emotional responses," says Dr Ingvars Birznieks, a sensory neurophysiologist at Neuroscience Research Australia.

It's why touch from someone you like and importantly, trust, can feel comforting yet the same touch from someone you dislike or are unsure about may cause you to recoil. The dissonance has its roots in evolutionary mechanisms designed to recognise threats. The problem is that in civilised society primal responses are not always appropriate. Or in attempting to shackle them, we instead corrupt them.

PURELY PLATONIC

Derek* didn't know how much he missed human touch until he was locked in a warm embrace with someone he'd just met. In the seven years since his divorce, the 48-year-old computer programmer from Sydney had barely touched another human being. He certainly hadn't done much hugging. But in 2017, after stumbling across a website that offered cuddle therapy, he met with a female practitioner. Starved of affection, companionship and tenderness, the feeling of touching a woman's body again was electric.

"I kind of melted," he says softly. "It had a very big impact on me."

What he'd been missing might surprise you. "It's a sense of connection with someone in a way that doesn't have any pressure to be romantic or sexual," he says. "I love being trusted. Someone trusting me with their body and their emotions is a precious gift to me."

In fact, it's valuable for anyone. That Derek had to pay for the privilege is an increasingly common situation for >

many Australian men, who lack outlets for companionship and affection. It's a circumstance that's complicated, Derek says, by the fact that many men conflate touch and sex. "What they're really looking for is touch, not necessarily a sexual release," he says. It's easy to see why this might happen. "If sex is the only time you get touched, then you're going to identify it with that," Derek says. "But the thing I value about cuddling is that it really is genuinely platonic."

Certainly, there are anecdotal reports from sex workers that many men just want to talk or cuddle. Similarly, the companionship dimension of cuddle therapy can't be understated. Souza says most of her clients are lonely and socially isolated. One even admitted cuddling her saved him from suicide. "I think the biggest benefit is people want to feel validated," she says. "They feel like no one cares about them. When you are with someone in your arms, they feel protected. Touch like this could feel like, 'Oh, okay. I matter to someone'."

So valuable has cuddle therapy become to Derek that he's unsure what would happen if he were to find a new romantic partner. "I would definitely want my wife to know about it," he says. "I wouldn't do it in secret."

Of course, platonic touch between males and females has always been a tricky area to navigate. The rise of the #MeToo movement has only poured fuel on an already combustible dynamic. Overlay this with the rules governing workplace behaviour and cross-gender touch begins to look particularly fraught, at least from a male perspective.

Field believes that as old workplace hierarchies crumble and women increasingly occupy positions of power, female-initiated touch is on the increase. "Nowadays women are the initiators and men are looking for cues," she says. This is a wise position to adopt, she adds. "I think it's imperative that men just watch for signals and respond in kind with a hug or a handshake."

In the current climate there's probably no alternative. But there is the possibility that by being overly self-conscious and cautious you're missing out on something valuable in terms of establishing bonds with your female friends and colleagues, says Dr Harry Blatterer, a senior lecturer in sociology at Macquarie University. "You're paying a price for the misbehaviour on the part

"You're paying a price for the misbehaviour of some men"

of some men," says Blatterer of the fallout of the #MeToo movement. "And the price is that you have to give up all the unselfconscious, spontaneous or friendly touch. I wonder if we're not losing something there. Intimacy has inherent risk. It's about vulnerability, which is perhaps what makes it so beautiful to us. It could be a case of throwing the baby out with the bathwater."

MAN-ON-MAN

If you've ever watched the Australian cricket team celebrate a dismissal, you'll know that their attitude to touch is governed by entirely different rules and conventions to those that apply to the general population. This is true of most male sporting teams. Men openly embrace, happily sling arms around each other and even pat each other's backsides. In football, a goal celebration can be marked by players piling on top of each other, rolling around on the turf in ways that are often cast as homoerotic.

There are a couple of theories as to why athletes engage in such undisguised displays of affection. One is that in overtly macho environments, such as the sporting field or the military, fears your behaviour will be misinterpreted as homoerotic are largely removed. This, some researchers argue, frees men to display affection for each other.

The fact is, even in today's relatively progressive times, homophobia still exerts a strong influence on male behaviour, argues Blatterer. "Intimacy between men and women is seen as the standard norm in our society," he says. "When straight males touch each other, they're exchanging a form of intimacy that's not really standard."

This cultural barrier is removed on the sporting field, Blatterer believes, not because homophobia is removed from the equation, but because it is even more rampant. "In these macho sporting contexts men are *so* secure in their machoism and masculinity, that they can even play at being gay," he says. "Either way, it reinforces homophobia."

Blatterer believes homophobia *per*

se is less a fear of being perceived as gay but rather signalling anything that's considered effeminate. The reason men often pat or slap each other on the back when giving hugs, he asserts, is to diminish any perception of effeminate behaviour and inject the act with a degree of masculinity. "That's maybe a consciousness that you can touch but only to a certain limit," Blatterer says.

Tied up in this dynamic is the concept of toxic masculinity, involving an unwillingness or inability to make yourself vulnerable. Together it creates an environment where touch is off-limits to males. "I think toxic masculinity is making men sick," Souza says. "They're missing out."

The sad truth of all this is that by limiting touch to specific contexts, like the sporting field, men may be missing out on a range of benefits and opportunities for genuine connection. A study by the University of Illinois of NBA teams found that those that touched each other the most early in the season had the best results come play-off time. Why? The players probably liked each other more. "One of the interpretations of that research is that by improving the bond you increase cooperation and understanding of each other," says Knight. "So, therefore as a team, you're going to play better."

GET HANDS-ON

Each night my wife and I engage in a bedtime ritual with our two-year-old daughter. The three of us lie on the bed as our daughter alternates between stroking each of our eyebrows. It's one of those quirky things toddlers do. It's also something I really enjoy. That's probably because spiking oxytocin is helping me bond with my daughter while my heart rate and blood pressure are decreasing. If I'm totally honest, though, these are possibly the only two people in the world who I feel completely unselfconscious when touching.

Reasons for being uncomfortable with touch can range from a past history of abuse and trauma, to being introverted

MUD, SWEAT AND REARS: DIFFERENT RULES APPLY TO TOUCH ON THE SPORTING FIELD.



JOHN O'GREADY

and self-conscious by nature, says Knight. Similarly, positive experiences with touch growing up naturally make you more comfortable with it, she adds.

It's no surprise that extroverted people are more likely to be touch-feely types, particularly with strangers. They're more expressive across the board. "Withdrawn people, who are withdrawn from other modes of communication, are more reluctant to be touched," says Field. But it's generally the social component of touch from which they recoil, she adds. "They're reluctant to be socially touched because it's unpredictable and they don't know how to respond."

What happens when you remove

that social component? The answer is something pretty remarkable. "We've never found people averse to massage," says Field. "We did a study on sexually abused women where we thought they would be averse to touch and they were not. We thought children with autism would be averse to touch and they weren't either. They loved it."

If you have a partner or a child all the better, she adds. "In all our studies we try to get couples to massage each other and get parents to massage children." The other aspect of touch we sometimes overlook is that it benefits the giver as much as the receiver. "We've done a couple of studies that found when partners massaged pregnant

women they benefitted just as much as the women," says Field. "We figure it's because when you're massaging someone, you're stimulating receptors in your hands, your arms and elbows."

Whatever form of touch you choose, you're best to make it as mindful as you possibly can. One thing Derek has learnt from his experiences hugging professionals is that cuddling is a skill and, like anything, the more you put into it, the more you get out of it. "A side effect of all the cuddles I've had is that if I ever got remarried, I would have much longer cuddles with my wife," he says. Then he says something truly startling. "And not all of them would lead to sex."

I come back to Derek's words a lot over the next few days until one night I find myself on the couch with my daughter and my wife. I pull them closer to me, feeling my daughter's arm on my arm, my hand on my wife's back. I take a moment to savour our closeness and connection, prolonging the tenderness of the moment as long as I can. As I do, I'm struck by a thought, let's call it a truth, at once self-evident but no less immutable: without touch, you can't feel. ■

**Name has been changed*

NEW SENSATIONS

To get the benefits of touch you don't necessarily need to bear hug another human, says Dr Tiffany Field. Here are some easy ways to increase the amount of touch in your life



YOGA

"In yoga you're rubbing your limbs against the floor or against your other limbs with moderate pressure, which is enough to see benefits," says Field. "We've compared yoga and massage and found virtually the same effects."



HUGS

Try to make your hug last at least 20 seconds. Research shows this is the duration found to increase levels of oxytocin, lower blood pressure and reduce heart rate.



PETTING A DOG

This provides both sensory stimulation as well as companionship, says Knight.



MASSAGE

In one study, levels of the stress hormone cortisol dropped 31 per cent following a rubdown, while levels of feel-good hormones like dopamine and serotonin increased roughly 30 per cent.

JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL NEUROSCIENCE

How To Score Your

10

(Without Becoming a Food Fascist)

Sure, doubling up on your fruit'n'veg is linked to a longer life, but who wants to spend those extra years pulverising wheatgrass, or portioning out carrot sticks? Fortunately, there's a tastier option. We asked seven top chefs to figure out how to get your fix of the good stuff and your RDIs

BY **SCARLETT WRENCH**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **PIOTR GREGORCZYK**

Monday

BATCH-PREP THIS EASY BREAKFAST FOR A CARB-RICH WORKOUT FUEL TO STOP YOUR MUSCLES RUNNING SHORT

*Your chef, New Zealander **Miles Kirby**, is the co-founder of Caravan restaurants and a former head chef at the Providores*

Carrot & Apple Overnight Oats

(3 of 10 of your daily fruit 'n' veg target)

INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)

- Pink Lady apples, 4
- Carrots, 3
- Gluten-free oats, 200g
- Apple juice, 200ml
- Oat milk, 100ml
- Maple syrup, 1Tbsp
- Pecans and banana, to serve

METHOD

The apple-a-day adage has nutritional merit. Their phytonutrients trigger beneficial changes in gut bacteria. Peel and grate them, along with the carrots. Combine with the oats – rich in beta-glucan, a form of cholesterol-lowering fibre – apple juice, oat milk and maple syrup in a mixing bowl. Maple syrup, unfortunately, does not count as one of your 10 . . . though it is a far better source of polyphenol nutrients than other sugars. Leave in the fridge overnight to set. Portion it out the next day, topped with sliced banana and crushed pecans, which you can toast in a dry pan. Devour before or after your morning workout to drip-feed your muscles with energy. >

Carrots have benefits beyond night vision: their biotin supports energy metabolism

MAKE IT TO

10



"You can make a simple salad for lunch with sliced tomatoes, crumbled feta and cubes of watermelon. Top with pumpkin seeds toasted in soy sauce and fresh chervil. Serve with a mackerel fillet." +2



"Broccamole on toast is a great snack: basically smashed avocado, mixed with cooked and puréed broccoli stalks, and chilli and onion." +2



"Roast a sliced red onion, squash with kale, oil and chilli. Serve with mint vinaigrette and sour onions, plus a side of pork or cod." +3

Tuesday

EATING YOUR GREENS SHOULD BE A PLEASURE, NOT A PAIN. THIS RECIPE DELIVERS IN DROVES

Your chef, **Judy Joo**, is a Korean American restaurateur, chef patron of Jinjuu restaurant and author of Korean Soul Food

Miso Kale Salad & Salmon (3)

INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)

THE DRESSING

- Shallots, 2Tbsp
- Soy sauce, 3Tbsp
- White miso, 1Tbsp
- Rice wine vinegar, 2Tbsp
- White sugar, 1tsp
- English mustard, ½tsp
- Roasted sesame oil, 1½tbsp
- Vegetable oil, 1½tbsp
- Cracked black pepper

THE SALAD

- Lemon, ½, juiced
- Kale, 170g, shredded, stems removed
- Baby spinach, 60g
- Flaked almonds, 2Tbsp
- Toasted pine nuts, 1Tbsp
- Toasted pumpkin seeds, 1Tbsp
- Parmesan, 1Tbsp, grated

TO SERVE

- Chilli-glazed salmon
- Spring onion salad
- Korean yuja pickles

METHOD

Naked kale can be bland and a little dry. So, dress it up. Start by finely slicing the shallots and whisking them together with the rest of the dressing ingredients. Members of the allium family – that's onions, garlic, leeks and chives – all count towards your 10, and are rich in immune-protective nutrients.

Massage lemon juice into the kale to break down the chewy fibres, then add the baby spinach – a good source of vitamin K, which supports fat loss – along with the dressing. Toss together, then add the nuts, seeds and Parmesan. Serve with salmon, a spring onion salad (Joo dresses onion in soy sauce, rice wine vinegar, gochugaru chilli powder, sesame oil and sugar) and a spoonful of Korean pickles.

MAKE IT TO

10



"For breakfast, try chilaquiles – crispy tortillas topped with fresh tomatoes, pickled jalapenos, chopped coriander and chives, sliced avocado and a fried egg." +2



"Make a 'jamu' smoothie with fresh turmeric, tamarind, ginger and lime juice. It's a natural pick-me-up." +1



"Korean bibimbap is an easy lunch option. Arrange your veg on top of a bowl of multigrain rice in sections, so the toppings resemble the spokes of a wheel: sautéed mushrooms, spinach, bean sprouts, carrots and kimchi, plus seared beef." +4



Wednesday

LEVEL UP YOUR MEAT-FREE MEALS WITH THIS NUTRIENT-DENSE SOUP. IT PACKS A PUNCH

Your chef, **Thomasina Miers**, is the co-founder of the Wahaca restaurants and the author of *Mexican Food Made Simple*

Black Bean Sopa Azteca (3)

INGREDIENTS (SERVES 6)

- Plum tomatoes, 2
- Garlic cloves, 3, skin on
- Butter, 25g
- Olive oil, 1Tbsp
- White onion, ½, finely chopped
- Dried oregano, 1tsp
- Bay leaves, 2
- Chipotle purée, 2Tbsp
- Cooked black beans, 600g
- Vegetable stock, 500ml
- A lime, juiced

TO SERVE

- Corn tortillas, 2, in thin strips
- Crumbled feta
- Sour cream
- Deep-fried ancho chillies
- Chopped coriander

METHOD

Start by dry-roasting the tomatoes and garlic in a heavy-bottomed pan for five minutes. When the garlic skin starts to char, put aside the cloves and let the vitamin C-rich tomatoes cook for another five minutes, until they char nicely, too.

Meanwhile, heat the butter and olive oil in a large pan. Once it's gently foaming, cook the onion and herbs until soft, then add the charred garlic, tomatoes and chipotle purée. Season, let it simmer, then add the beans, including the water from the can. Black beans are a great source of zinc for immunity. Cook for a few more minutes before adding the stock and lime and simmer for 10-15 minutes, so the flavours can develop. Whiz it briefly with a stick blender.

Oven-bake the tortilla strips or fry in a dash of olive oil until golden and crisp. Sprinkle them over the soup, along with the rest of your toppings. >

MAKE IT TO

10



"Start with muesli: toast nuts, seeds, wheat bran and oats, then combine them with fruit, such as bananas and dried dates. Top with Greek yoghurt and fruit compote: prune and Earl Grey." +3



"Dried fruit such as apricots with some mixed nuts are an easy, instant snack between meals." +1



"For dinner, try a Thai green curry with chilli, coconut and lemongrass. Brussels sprouts and butternut pumpkin are good fillers. Add chicken thighs, or keep it vegan with extra pumpkin." +3

The potent anti-ageing carotenoids in tomatoes are even better absorbed when cooked

Thursday

CUSTOMISE THIS GRAIN BOWL WITH SEASONAL VEG AND REAP MORE FROM YOUR TUPPERWARE LUNCH

Your chef, **Ollie Templeton**, is executive chef at Carousel and worked at Spanish-Moroccan restaurant Moro

Sushi Rice & Seasonal Veg (3)

INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)

- Sushi rice, 200g
- An eggplant, sliced
- Cucumber, ½
- Turnip, ½
- Kale, 100g
- Cherry tomatoes, 6
- Sake vinegar, 3Tbsp
- Soy sauce, 2Tbsp
- Brown sugar, 1tsp
- Sesame seeds, 1Tbsp, toasted
- Small bunch coriander, chopped

METHOD

Start with the rice: rinse it until the water runs clear, tossing occasionally. Add to a pot with 200ml of water and cook on a low heat for 15 minutes with the lid on – don't lift the lid, just trust it. White carbs may not be in fashion, but they'll help you recover faster after hard training.

While the rice cooks, roast the eggplant (or burn it on a gas hob) until cooked, then let it cool. Dice the rest of the veg and the tomatoes, then season with a pinch of salt and a touch of the vinegar and soy. Whisk the rest of the soy and vinegar with the sugar. Cucumber's benefits extend beyond its low kilojoule count – it also contains anti-cancer compounds.

Once the rice is cooked, spread it on a plate to allow it to cool, then add the vinegar mix along with the sesame seeds. Top with the eggplant, veg, coriander and a dollop of your favourite chilli sauce.

MAKE IT TO

10



"Top your fruit granola with a dollop of plain yoghurt, a drizzle of natural peanut butter and some stewed greengages – a type of plum which adds natural sweetness." +2



"Sliced mango with a pinch of salt, chilli flakes and lime makes for a great fast snack. For something savoury, top half an avocado with salt, pepper, olive oil and sherry vinegar." +2



"For a light side dish to fish or chicken, simply combine steamed or sautéed greens with toasted pumpkin seeds and sliced wedges of grapefruit." +3

Adding healthy fats to your pumpkin makes its protective antioxidants more effective

Friday

ADD NUTRITIONAL FIREPOWER TO CURRY NIGHT FOR A HEALTHY WINTER WARMER

Your chef, **Karan Gokani**, is the director of *Hoppers* which draws inspiration from the food of Sri Lanka and South India

Sweet Potato & Pumpkin Curry (3)

INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)

- Sweet potatoes, 2, cubed
- Butternut pumpkin, 300g, cubed
- Ground turmeric, 2tsp
- Coconut or rapeseed oil, 2Tbsp
- A cinnamon stick
- Cumin seeds, 1tsp
- A white onion, finely chopped
- Garlic cloves, 4, minced
- Hot curry powder, 2tsp
- Chilli powder, 1½tsp
- Coriander powder, 2tsp
- Coconut milk, 350ml
- Baby spinach, 2 handfuls
- Green chillies, 2, cut lengthways
- Fresh curry leaves, 2 stalks

METHOD

Boil a pan of water with a teaspoon of turmeric and add the sweet potato, an excellent source of potassium, which is key to muscle function. Boil for eight minutes, then add the squash for another five until the veg is almost cooked but firm when pressed. Remove the veg, keeping the liquid.

Heat the oil in a saucepan. Add the blood sugar-lowering cinnamon and cumin. After 30 seconds, add the onion and garlic, then cover the pan and cook on a medium-to-low heat until the onions soften. Add the dry spices and sauté for a further minute. Pour in the coconut milk – a source of energising MCT fats – and a splash of the reserved stock, then bring to a simmer.

Finally, add the potatoes, pumpkin, spinach, green chillies and curry leaves, then simmer for six minutes. Add a pinch of salt to taste and cook for a further minute. Garnish with fried curry leaves to serve. >

MAKE IT TO

10



“Batch cook a rasam, an Indian broth made with tamarind juice. Add tomatoes, garlic, cumin, curry leaves, dried red chillies and lamb bones.

Serve with onion, chilli and coconut roti.” +3



“For a snack, mix pineapple with gotu kola, mint, coconut, lime, black pepper and Maldivian fish flakes.” +1



“Add flavour to your fish by baking it in a parcel with a marinade of blended coriander, spinach, lime leaves, fresh ginger, garlic and green chillies. Serve with a seasoned salad of finely diced tomato, red onions and cucumber.” +3

Saturday

THIS STEW HARNESSES LEFTOVER VEG, SO HAVE A FORAGE IN YOUR FRIDGE

Your chef, **Andrew Clarke**, is chef director at St Leonards and co-founder of the mental-health campaign *Pilot Light*

Root Veg Winter Stew (3)

INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)

- A large onion
- Carrots, 2 medium
- Celeriac, ½, peeled
- A red capsicum
- A green capsicum
- Garlic cloves, 4, sliced
- Bay leaves, 3
- Turkish pepper flakes, 1-2tsp
- A potato, peeled and diced
- Beef heart tomatoes, 2, diced
- Chicken stock or water, 1L
- Curly kale, handful, roughly chopped

TO SERVE

- Crème fraîche
- Olive oil
- Small bunch dill
- Small bunch parsley

METHOD

Start by heating a glug of oil in a large heavy-bottomed pan over a medium-high heat. Dice the onions, carrots, celeriac and immunity-supporting capsicum and add them to the pan along with the garlic and bay leaves. Cook for two minutes, stirring frequently.

Add the pepper flakes and cook for another minute. Now tip in the potatoes and tomatoes (or use tinned tomatoes, minus the juice) along with the stock. Bring to a boil, then reduce and simmer. Cook gently for 15 minutes, or until the root veg are almost soft, then add the kale for a further five minutes. Season well with salt and pepper. Serve in bowls with a dollop of crème fraîche, a drizzle of olive oil and plenty of torn dill and parsley.

MAKE IT TO
10



"For breakfast, try this little number: buckwheat porridge with Agen prunes, blueberries, almonds and a drizzle of proper maple syrup." +2



"Bitter leaves are abundant in winter. Try using radicchio or chicory as a 'taco' shell and stuffing with grilled broccoli and crushed Jerusalem artichoke, topped with a Mexican-style salsa macha." +2



Indian curry with sweet potato, parsnip, mushrooms, lentils, coconut milk, cashews and herbs. Serve with flatbread." +3

Celeriac can help you add creamy texture to light dishes, with just 272kJ in a cupful

Sunday

GIVEN A LITTLE TIME, YOU CAN TURN VEG INTO THE STAR ACT. NO STEAK NEEDED

Your chef, **Ben Tish**, is chef director at the Stafford London and Sicilain-Moorish restaurant Norma, and author of Moorish

Roasted Cauli & Ricotta (3)

INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)

- Large cauliflower, stalks separated
- Turmeric, 1Tbsp
- Cumin seeds, 2tsp, crushed
- Coriander seeds, 2tsp, crushed
- Garlic cloves, 2, finely chopped
- Crème fraiche, 30ml
- Sheep's milk ricotta, 175g
- Shelled walnuts, 100g
- Caster sugar, 1tsp
- Radishes, 12, finely sliced

FOR THE EGGPLANT

- Extra virgin olive oil, 50ml
- Red wine vinegar, 40ml
- Garlic cloves, 2, finely sliced
- Small bunch mint
- Eggplant, 2 large, sliced

METHOD

Quarter the caulis, drizzle liberally with oil and season with the spices and garlic. Do the same with the stalks. Roast it all at 190°C for 30 minutes, remove the stalks, then roast the florets for a further 25-35 minutes until caramelised. Meanwhile, whip together the crème fraiche and ricotta until smooth, for an extra 3g of protein per serving. Toss the walnuts with oil, salt and sugar and toast in a hot pan for 2-3 minutes.

To make the eggplant, whisk the oil, vinegar and honey, and warm in a pan. Add the garlic and mint stalks, strain and put aside. Heat a big glug of oil in a pan and fry the eggplant in batches until golden. Drain on kitchen paper and sprinkle with sea salt. Stir the mint leaves into the vinaigrette.

When it's all ready, serve the cauliflower by sprinkling over omega-3-rich walnuts and radishes. Serve the ricotta on the side. Plate up the eggplant separately and top with the mint vinaigrette. ■

MAKE IT TO

10



"Roast a whole baby pumpkin, and stuff it with cooked wild rice, wilted spinach, sliced chilli and thyme. Top with a fried egg for an alternative brunch."

+2



"For a simple snack, slice a couple of tomatoes and season with marjoram, chilli and olive oil. Or you can roast Padrón chillies and serve with a generous sprinkle of sea salt."

+2



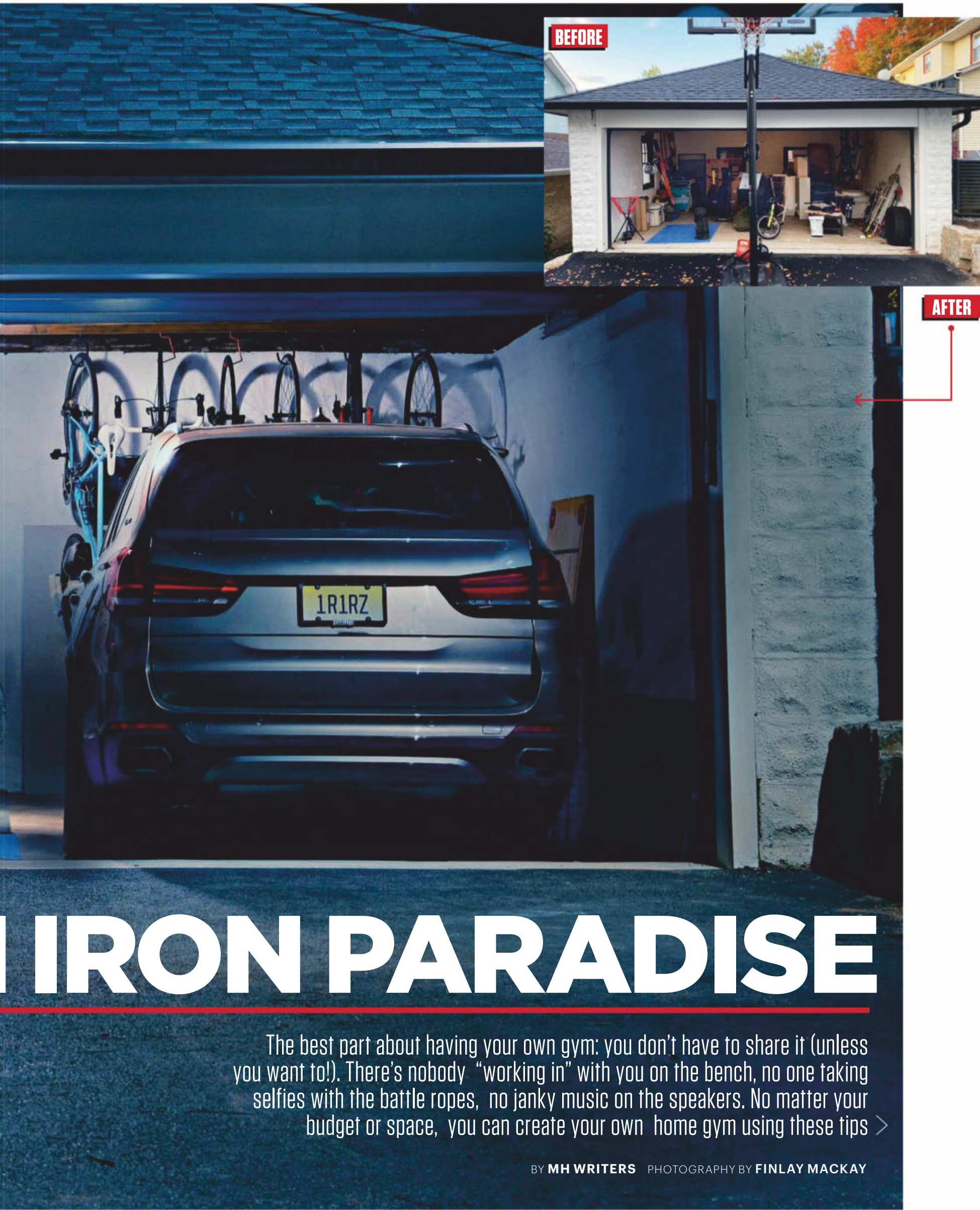
"Braised borlotti beans make a filling, low-cost dinner. Cook them slow with sliced romano capsicum, broccoli and garlic. You can layer some anchovies over the top for a savoury hit."

+2+3

Packed with glucosinolates, cauliflower speeds up the body's natural detoxification process



BUILD YOUR OWN



BEFORE

AFTER

IRON PARADISE

The best part about having your own gym: you don't have to share it (unless you want to!). There's nobody "working in" with you on the bench, no one taking selfies with the battle ropes, no janky music on the speakers. No matter your budget or space, you can create your own home gym using these tips >

BY **MH WRITERS** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **FINLAY MACKAY**

TO HELP PICK the best gear and glean tips on how to build an affordable home gym, we consulted an *Avengers*-style fitness squad: Hollywood trainer Magnus Lygdback, who creates home gyms for stars like Ben Affleck and Alexander Skarsgård; Cooper Mitchell, editor-in-chief of *GarageGymReviews.com*; and US *MH*'s fitness brains, director Ebenezer Samuel and associate fitness editor Brett Williams.

Assuming you don't have unlimited space or resources, like Dwayne Johnson, you'll need to figure out what you want. Before you do anything, says Lygdback, ask yourself these three questions:

1. What do you like to do?
2. What does your body need?
3. Do you want to get better at something?

Then use that info to guide how you divide your space and budget. If you like doing bodyweight work and circuits, your biggest costs may be a bench, a pull-up bar and kettlebells. If you like classic strength training, make sure you have enough room for a standard Olympic barbell, which is 2.13m long. At minimum, 0.8 square metres should set you up for everything from deadlifts to broad jumps.

Don't have much space? Technology to the rescue. These days, there are smarter do-it-all machines that enable you to perform hundreds of exercises.

Like all of us, your home gym is a work in progress. After three months, take inventory. Ask those three questions again, and if need be, evict the stuff you're not using and draft new equipment. It's your gym! Whatever your space or budget, we have you covered. Get after it!

IN YOUR GARAGE

MH staffer Ben Court (bottom left) suffers from fitness ADD. His favourite workouts involve lots of exercises with different objects to lift, swing, carry and slam. Samuel (below) helped him convert his home garage into a dynamic space primed for intense metabolic circuits



BAR STAR

◀ Forged from 11-gauge steel, **Rep's multigrip bar** (\$191; repfitness.com) offers a sturdy platform for pullups and leg raises. Plus, it doubles as an anchor for a **TRX 2** (\$250; trxtraining.com), which links to an app with hundreds of exercises.

HEAVY STUFF

Popularised by CrossFit and military workouts, sandbags are awkward to lift, making them good tools for building functional strength whether you're doing bear-crawl drags, clean and jerks, or farmer's carries.

GoRuck's sandbags (from \$140; goruck.com) are made of rugged Cordura and have padded handles, so they're marginally easier to hold.



SWING SET

Some trainers say the only weights you need are kettlebells – they're that versatile. **Kettlebell Kings Powder Coat bells** (from \$75; kettlebellkings.com.au) are cast from one piece of iron, making them extra durable. They're available in weights from 4-48kg and have a lifetime warranty.

BENCH WORK

◀ An adjustable bench like the **Rep AB-5000 Zero-Gap** (\$740; repfitness.com) lets you do standard moves like flat presses as well as incline and ab work. It has seven potential back angles and four seat angles so you can target different muscle groups. Even though it's made of heavy-duty steel, it's easy to move thanks to its wheels.



INSPIRATION BOARD

A whiteboard is great for listing your workout and noting PRs. The **Office Marshal magnetic dry-erase board** (from \$30; [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)) is easy to mount and clean and comes in five sizes. The **Ikea Kallax** (\$65; [ikea.com](https://www.ikea.com)) provides sturdy shelving for boxing gear, straps, mobility tools, and more.



KILLER CARDIO

▲ Few warm-ups get the blood flowing as quickly as a two-minute spin on the devil's bike. The **Schwinn Airdyne AD7** (\$1799; [gymandfitness.com.au](https://www.gymandfitness.com.au)) has a bright LCD display showing calories, watts, distance, speed, RPM and heart rate. Hop on for everything from max-intensity one-minute intervals to 45-minute tempo rides. And thanks to its wheels, you can roll it away to create space. Med balls are great for home gyms because of their versatility. Use them for explosive moves like slams and floor-based ab stuff like Russian twists. A couple of good, grippy med balls are a must. **GymNext's Flex Timer** (\$279; [amazon.com.au](https://www.amazon.com.au)) pairs with your smartphone, enabling you to set intervals and display your heart rate.

BATTLE ROYALE

▼ **Onnit's battle ropes** (\$220; [onnit.com](https://www.onnit.com)) are made of a flexible but durable nylon-polypropylene blend and have XL end caps, making them easier to grip. **Everlast's Nevatear heavy bag** (from \$99; [rebel.com.au](https://www.rebel.com.au)) is made of tough synthetic leather. The **Hayabusa T3 boxing gloves** (\$199; [mmafightstore.com.au](https://www.mmafightstore.com.au)) have plush padding and are easy to put on and take off. >

POWER BASICS

Don't waste money on fancy flooring. Instead, get sheets of 180cm-by-120cm, 2cm-thick rubber. They're made for horse stalls and provide dense padding, ideal if you're doing box jumps or you drop your weights. Recruit a friend to help you pick them up. They're heavy!



IN YOUR CLOSET

If you live in an apartment or are just a minimalist, use these tips to maximise your space and still get a serious sweat.



SR FIT BANDS

Start with three resistance bands – heavy, medium and light. SR's bands have Velcro cuffs you can attach to your ankles for more exercises. From \$20; srfitbands.com



BOWFLEX 552I DUMBBELLS

Easily adjustable from 2-24kg. The range is great enough to challenge you on heavy floor presses but light enough to let you do lateral raises. \$499; gymandfitness.com.au



20KG BUMPER PLATE

Even if you can't fit a barbell in your apartment, pick up a 20kg plate. You can curl it, use it for rows or lunges, and put it on your back for push-ups. \$340; aussiestrength.com.au

... SPARE ROOM

This is for guys who have space in their homes and want to do both traditional strength work and interval training. Yes, some of it is expensive, but it's worth it. "Where I see people fail is when they compromise too much," says Lygdback. "It's an investment in your body and health."



BODY IRON FUNCTIONAL TRAINER

A space-conscious cable machine that offers smooth resistance for exercises like cable rows and chops and has a pull-up bar, too. \$1299; worldfitness.com.au



ROGUE RML-3W POWER RACK

Go heavy with this 11-gauge-steel rack, then fold it against the wall. Pair it with Rogue's burly 190 PSI steel 28mm Olympic bar. \$860; roguefitness.com.au



CONCEPT2: MODEL D ROWER

Intuitive to use, smooth, and durable, the model D also has a new display, which features easy programming for custom workouts. \$1595; concept2.com.au



ROGUE RUBBER HEX DUMBBELLS

Budget so that you have no wider range than 5kg – for example, 10, 15, 20 versus 10, 20, 30 – to progress safely. From \$10; roguefitness.com.au



IRON EDGE FOAM BOX SET

Three boxes of varying heights in one easy package. Quick and easy to adjust with variations in height between 60, 30 and 15cm. \$813; ironedge.com.au



ONNIT STEEL MACE

Use this old-school strength tool for shoulder-mobility work, standing core exercises and recovery sessions. It's much harder to control than you think. \$60; onnit.com

... LIVING ROOM

These high-tech strength and cardio machines represent the future of home fitness. While some are yet to land in Australia, they loom as potential statement furniture in your lounge room.



MIRROR

Not yet available here, stay tuned because the mirror/display allows on-demand workouts for \$40 with live feedback. US\$1495 + \$39 per month; mirror.co



TONAL

Essentially, this is a wall-mounted flat-screen TV with resistance-training-cable arms. It's great for guided solo or partnered workouts. US\$2995 tonal.com



NORDICTRACK S22I CYCLE

Like a Peloton, it has streaming workouts and a 55cm touchscreen. But it tilts up and down to better simulate climbs and descents. \$4999; nordictrack.com.au



FOR A BUDGET BODY BLAST

Chris Hemsworth's app Centr is available via iOS app, Apple Watch, Android and web, offering daily workouts, meal plans and meditations. Get in A-list shape with trainers like MH cover star Luke Zocchi, Da Rulk and Michael Oladije Jr. centr.com

THE GYM THAT BUILT MY FAMILY

I needed a place to store wood. My five kids needed a place to play.
But the space we made turned into something much bigger

BY C. J. CHIVERS

Midway through last autumn, I stepped into my yard to find eight kids brimming with excitement. One was swinging from a rope. Another hopped over a set of weight plates and declared himself “safe!” as he landed on each one. Two more kids were leaping from a tractor tyre and challenging the rest to follow.

These kids (only one of whom is mine) were not exactly working out. They were enthusiastically marking an unexpected turn in my youngest son’s 10th birthday party, as he and his classmates commandeered our open-air gym for play. A workout area that my older sons trained on for lifeguarding and military fitness testing had become an imaginary volcano or pirate ship. This scene fit our backyard’s evolution: a gym we planned as a repurposing of firewood storage has become, on its own, something akin to a neighbourhood park. Along the way, my children have used the space to develop agility, stamina and strength.

It all began in 2015, when my teenaged sons and I sketched out a design for three firewood racks. With pressure-treated lumber, power tools and plenty of labour, we began building on New Year’s Day 2016. After two weekends, we had a trio of racks that together could hold six cords of wood while also doubling as an alternative to a dingy basement gym. To one rack we added a high wall for wallballs. To another we fastened a pull-up bar. For the third, we designed an angled beam rising about 5m in the air, from which we suspended the climbing rope. To this rack we also affixed a crossbeam, and from it hung a TRX set and a pair of rings.

By spring, we had stocked the racks with firewood and the gym with an Olympic bar, a set of plates and kettlebells. Through a friend at her CrossFit gym, we found a tractor tyre.

The gym was not perfect. The weight of the firewood and the softness of the soil caused the centre rack to sink unevenly, a tic that remained even after we jacked up and braced the most offending corner. With time we came to accept the flaw, just as I accept my own limits and the joint pain that has come with advancing age.

Friends teased us playfully. Some called the space a prison gym. Others asked if I came up with the idea on a combat outpost in

They provided conceptual inspiration.

Remember that word. Fun. Whatever the merits of this firewood-rack-and-outdoor-gym combination, once built, it needed no sales pitch.

The gym attracted users on its own. My oldest son, Jack, was a lifeguard at a beach in the summers after his high school junior and senior years. Between shifts, he conditioned at the gym; we would see him shirtless, swatting mosquitoes as he put himself through wallball and kettlebell circuits, and mastered rope climbs without legs. My next oldest, Mick, is in his final year of high school with plans of joining the Marines. Often I see him on the rope or at the pull-up bar, headset on, in the zone.

These scenes were predictable. What we did not anticipate was that our gym would become a gathering place, too. Joe, now 10, was six when the gym appeared in his backyard. My daughter, Elizabeth, was 11. Both of them took to the gym as if it were a playground, and their friends joined them. In the summer, it’s a fortress to be defended or stormed in a water-balloon war. In the winter, the ammunition changes to snowballs. Sometimes I look out the window and see children from up and down the street clustered

around the tractor tyre or rope, engaged in games they have invented, complete with rules only they know. We built the centerpiece for all this training and play for less than the annual membership cost at the local fitness centres. Almost five years on, it’s hard to imagine money better spent. ■



Afghanistan, where I had previously worked. This latter question was fair. Troops in remote positions concoct novel ways to work out in confined spaces and under the open sky, often with makeshift equipment, including dumbbells made from packed sandbags and tent poles for pull-up bars. My sons and I did not draw directly from any of those many designs. But war-zone gyms had proved to be both practical and fun, and demonstrated something too many big-box gyms miss: simplicity.

C. J. Chivers is a Pulitzer-prize-winning reporter for The New York Times Magazine and the author of The Fighters and The Gun.

CANT-REPLACEMENT
THERAPY INJECT NEW
LIFE INTO YOUR ANTI-
AGEING EFFORTS?



THE MEASURE OF A MAN

For decades, testosterone has been sold to us as the key to strength, vitality, fortitude and that most nebulous of traits, masculinity.

But do your T-levels really dictate what kind of man you are? Or how you live your life? And what does masculinity mean, anyway?

MH investigates the myths, misconceptions and politicisation of the male hormone >

By ***Richard Godwin*** Photography By ***Rowan Fee***

On 1 June 1889, a French-Mauritian physiologist and proto-life-hacker named Charles-Édouard Brown-Séquard gave a presentation at the Société de Biologie in Paris. He reported that he had been experimenting with something he called a “liquide testiculaire”. He made this by mixing water with blood from the testicular veins, semen and a “juice extracted from a testicle, crushed immediately after it had been taken from a dog or a guinea pig”. Then he injected himself with it.

Monsieur Brown-Séquard was happy to report that, at 72 years old, he felt like a new man. He estimated that he could project his urine 25 per cent further than he could before. He also found that his brain was rejuvenated; he now felt as sharp as he had when he was young. He warned that the effects were short-lived – a major clue that he was experiencing a placebo effect – but no matter. By the end of 1889, it was estimated that as many as 12,000 scientists were shooting up testicle smoothies. Chemists made a fortune from selling the “elixir of life”.

It was, of course, bollocks. But to be fair to Brown-Séquard, his hunch that there might be some sort of “substance or substances” produced in our glands, running through our bloodstream, influencing everything from our penises to our brains, wasn’t so wide of the mark. This is what hormones do. Hormones are molecules that flow through our endocrine systems and attach themselves to receptors in our cells, delivering messages that influence sex and fertility, energy levels, the strength of our muscles, mood, metabolism, memory, sleep and everything in between.

The first hormone to be discovered was secretin, in 1902. Over the next few decades, oestrogens, progestogens and androgens – the hormones that determine sexual development

– were identified, too. By 1935, the American biologist Fred Koch had performed enough experiments with bulls’ testes purloined from Chicago abattoirs to establish the existence of the androgen testosterone – the big T – which soon became known as the “male hormone”. What followed was something of a testicle rush. When cockerels were injected with testosterone, their droopy cockscombs became perkier. There is a cocktail called a Monkey Gland (gin, orange juice, grenadine, absinthe), named in honour of Serge Voronoff, a Russian surgeon who advocated grafting monkey testicles onto humans to increase energy and longevity. In short, it appeared that the essence of life had been located – and it was male.

GENDER TROUBLE

Fast-forward a century and, despite the advances in science, it seems that this is still something that many are willing to believe. In the US and increasingly here in Australia, testosterone replacement therapy (TRT) is touted as a cure for the so-called “male menopause”, a miraculous way to restore youth and alpha-maleness. Meanwhile, “low T” has become an insult aimed at men perceived to be lacking in energy, resolve and manliness – often used synonymously with terms such as “soy boy” and “snowflake”.

Across the world, a wave of macho leaders – Vladimir Putin of Russia, Viktor Orbán of Hungary, Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil, Narendra Modi of India, Recep Erdoğan of Turkey, Rodrigo Duterte of the Philippines – has achieved success with various strains of testosterone politics, often promising to restore some assumed natural order between men and women. Donald Trump went so far as to have his T-levels read out on live TV during the 2016 US election campaign. “Your testosterone is 441, which is actually... good,” said Dr Mehmet Oz. Cue

RISERS AND FALLERS

MANY FACTORS CAN HAVE A LONG- AND SHORT-TERM IMPACT ON YOUR LEVELS

POSITIVE FEEDBACK

Social cues have an impact. The Polish Institute of Sport found that rugby players who watched a video of their good game plays had a T increase of up to 50 per cent, compared with those who were shown their mistakes.

STRENGTH TRAINING

While weightlifting and resistance training can give you a notable boost, testosterone levels alone don’t deserve too much of the credit when it comes to an athlete’s performance and ability.

POOR SLEEP QUALITY

In one study, daytime T levels dipped by 10-15 per cent when participants had only five hours of sleep per night for about a week. Even a night’s missed kip was enough to skew test results.

a round of applause from the studio audience. “Donald Trump: Finally Someone with Balls” read T-shirts at his rallies. During the same campaign, one Florida doctor offered T tests for any man considering voting for Hillary Clinton.

Again, all of this is, to put it bluntly, balls. Testosterone doesn’t predict how liberal you are, let alone your sexual success, or whether you’ll beat your wife, live forever or be a good leader. But there is something about testosterone that plays into these myths of maleness – myths that circulated even before testosterone was discovered.

Some facts, then. Testosterone is the prototypical “masculine” hormone, as Professor Pierre-Marc Bouloux of the Society of Endocrinologists notes, but that doesn’t mean it’s the essence of masculinity. All fetuses begin life as female phenotypes, but at six weeks or so, male fetuses experience a surge of testosterone. “It is very important in helping to masculinise the baby in the womb – it gives him a penis – and when you reach puberty, it enables the deepening of the voice, increases the size of the penis, and so on,” explains Bouloux.

After puberty, our testosterone levels remain more or less constant until our mid-forties, when there’s a slight drop. “A small proportion of men, perhaps 10-15 per cent, will have a significant reduction in testosterone. But whether that’s enough to cause symptoms is another matter,” says Bouloux. To frame this as a “male menopause” that is equivalent to the hormonal changes experienced by women of a similar age, he notes, would be misleading.

Testosterone is often contrasted with oestrogen, supposedly the “feminine” hormone. But men have oestrogen and women have testosterone, just in different concentrations. Testosterone also acts differently on different men,

"THERE IS NO CREDIBLE LINK BETWEEN HIGH T AND SUPPOSEDLY MASCULINE TRAITS LIKE RISK-TAKING"

and no one has ever established a credible link between high T levels and supposedly masculine traits such as assertiveness, bravery or risk-taking. Simply put, more testosterone does not necessarily make a man more of any of these things. It does promote muscle growth – but there's more to a man than his biceps.

THE MALE ANIMAL

Our relationship with testosterone is complicated. And it can easily become controversial: consider the bitter arguments surrounding testosterone levels in female and transgender athletes.

There are three main androgens – testosterone, dihydrotestosterone (DHT) and androstenedione. These are all part of an intricate system involving enzymes, receptors, proteins and other hormones. For example, Professor Bouloux notes, men who lack the enzyme to convert DHT into oestrogen tend to experience a loss of libido. "This suggests that libido in men may not be testosterone dependent, so much as oestrogen dependent," he says. "You need oestrogen in order to get the full flavour of testosterone, if you will."

Moreover, Bouloux explains that it's a misconception that our testosterone levels dictate our behaviour. Testosterone doesn't "make" men sexually aggressive. If you're predisposed to be sexually aggressive, a surge of testosterone might nudge you to be more so. But this effect varies in individuals. "We do know that some men are unduly sensitive to their own testosterone and others are less sensitive," says Bouloux. "Within the global distribution

of men, there will be some who only require a small amount of testosterone to have all the effects, and others who have high levels of testosterone but don't have the aggression, or the high muscle bulk."

This isn't the message you would take from the popular image of the hormone, argues Rebecca Jordan-Young and Katrina Karkazis in *Testosterone: An Unauthorized Biography*. "T is at once a specific molecule and a mercurial cultural figure – a familiar villain and attractive bad boy that supplies a ready explanation for innumerable social phenomena," they write. They cite a 2002 episode of the radio show *This American Life*, in which a transgender man from New York describes how he started taking testosterone while transitioning from a female body while at university. "I felt like a monster a lot of the time. And it made me understand men," he reported. He described an "incredible increase in libido", to the point where he could no longer uphold a conversation with a woman. Not only that: he developed a new interest in physics and problems with expressing his emotions. So far, so macho.

As Jordan-Young and Karkazis point out, ascribing these changes exclusively to testosterone lends a scientific veneer to stereotypes that are cultural, not biological: men are lecherous, boys don't cry, women can't do physics. But this account also positions testosterone as a mysterious force, running through the veins of men, possessing them, making them do things against their will. "T is a wilful character," they write. "When T whispers instructions >



in the ears of hapless men, it's clear that T has a plan, and that plan is to maintain the natural order of things." It's like a horror story – or, depending on your point of view, a fairy tale.

THE AGES OF MAN

A new generation of monkey gland salesmen has latched onto these myths. Forever Alpha, a website promoting T-raising regimes, promises to help you "shed fat, increase testosterone levels and skyrocket your sex appeal". The associated Twitter account warns that "low T" is a sure route to depression, anxiety and stress. Some of the advice is sound and undoubtedly preferable to injecting yourself with anabolic steroids: sleep more, don't get fat, cut down on alcohol, eat more fish. However, some of it is quite strange: "Spend more time with attractive females! It's a scientific fact – testosterone goes up by 13% even by flirting with attractive women." Lucky women.

Such advice exists since

hormones are understood to respond to not only biological but social cues – even political ones. Hence the widespread notion that testosterone levels are falling due to some sort of "feminisation" of society. Exhibit A is an oft-cited 2007 study from the *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism* that shows the average testosterone levels in males falling by around 1 per cent each year from 1987 to 2004.

Many theories have been put forward as to why this might be. It could be related to rising rates of obesity. It could be because we spend so much time sitting down. It could be linked to the decline in sperm counts observed over the same period. Or it could have something to do with men playing a more active role in childcare. New dads experience a notable decrease in testosterone production. So, are we saying that it's bad for men to care for children?

It could also be that the data is being misinterpreted. Medical

WHAT THE NUMBERS MEAN

IF YOU'RE TEMPTED TO TRY A HOME TEST, BEAR IN MIND THAT YOUR T LEVEL WILL FLUCTUATE THROUGHOUT THE WEEK (SEE RISERS AND FALLERS). SO, ASSESS YOURSELF AT LEAST TWICE

5.2 NMOL/L

Severely low T for an adult man. Book in with a specialist.

5.2-9.13 NMOL/L

Below optimal, though anything above 7.4 nmol/L isn't unusual for men aged 50 and over.

9.14-31.7 NMOL/L

Normal for men under 40. If you're close to 10 nmol/L and feel fine, you're no less healthy than a man at 24 nmol/L.

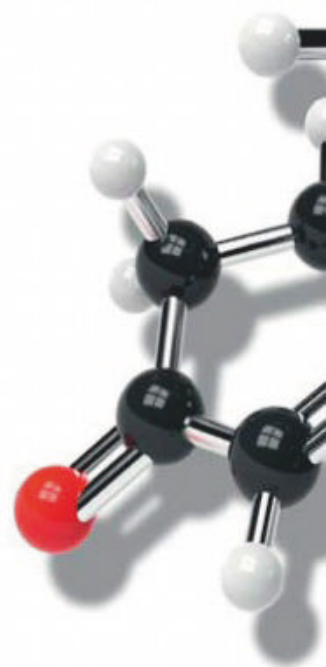
104 NMOL/L

The kind of unnatural level you'd associate with a bodybuilder who is supplementing with something...

professionals seem far less concerned about the dip than conservative commentators and alt-right forums. "It's not a public health issue that I'm aware of," says Dr Allan Pacey, a professor of andrology at the University of Sheffield. "What makes it high up our agenda is the perception that men should do something about their declining testosterone levels when they're older. And this is fuelled by social media and private medicine. It's not being fuelled by the science."

Pacey stresses that testosterone levels are not constant throughout life. You need spikes when you're going through transition phases such as puberty, but you don't need puberty levels of testosterone

SCIENCE SHOWS THAT MASCULINITY IS NOT A METRIC TO BE COUNTED.



to sustain masculinity. “So, are we saying that a 45-year-old is less of a man than a 25-year-old, just because he’s got 10 per cent less testosterone? That’s when it begins to get dangerous.”

It’s true that some men stop producing sufficient testosterone as they age, and this is a serious problem for them. The numbers are relatively small – about 4 per cent of men in the 50-80 age cohort – but when Bouloux lists the symptoms, you can see why so many become convinced that they are low T. “You have a decline in libido,” he says. “You might become impotent, or have a softening of erections. You may accumulate some tummy fat. You make fewer red blood cells, so you become a bit anaemic, and you

may feel more tired. You may well experience irritability, anxiety, frustration, a loss of identity.”

THE LOW-DOWN

Drug companies love symptoms that are so vague and widespread. However, there are myriad other reasons why you might experience a loss of libido. Perhaps you’re in an unhappy relationship. And perhaps you’re experiencing anxiety, frustration and a loss of identity because you’ve lost your job or work in an unstable industry. Your irritability might simply be the result of spending too much time on social media. Or perhaps you’re drinking too much. “Many people who try to sell the drugs suggest that

somehow this loss of vitality is directly related to testosterone. That couldn’t be more untrue,” says Bouloux. “Men often come to see me imagining they’re low in testosterone. Then I test them and discover they’re in the normal range.”

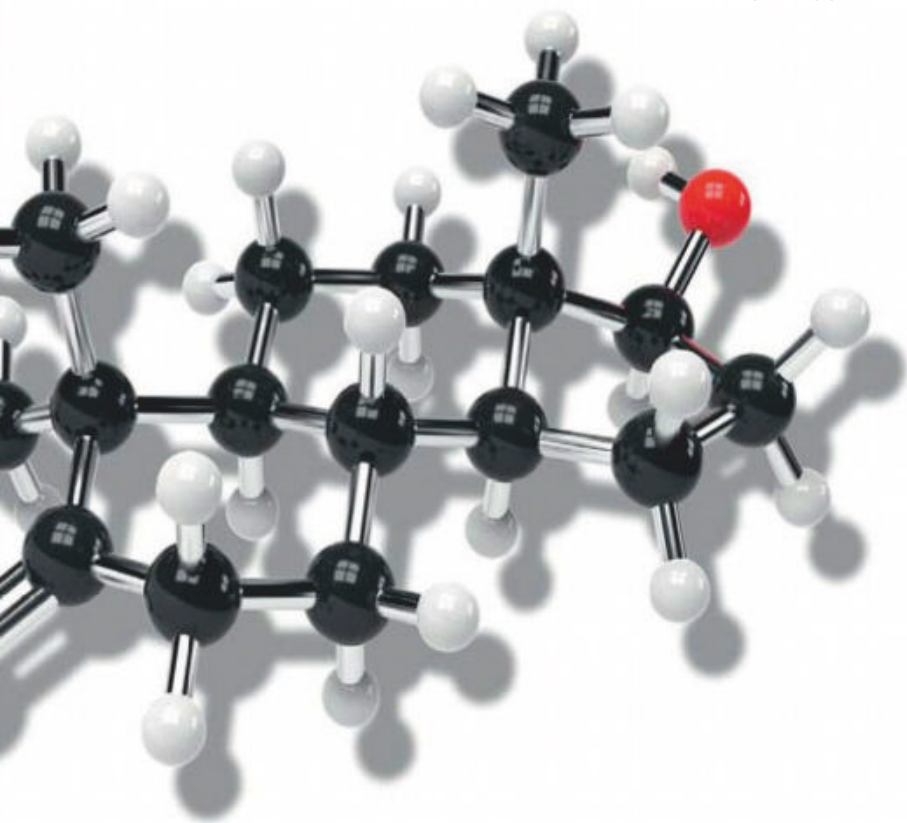
It should be further stressed that the evidence for the efficacy of testosterone used as a treatment is not good. A systematic review of 156 eligible randomised controlled trials from 2016 found testosterone to be “ineffective” when it came to treating erectile dysfunction and “inconsistent” when it came to libido. Most studies found “no beneficial effect” on mood, personality or cognition.

Testosterone did consistently

increase muscle strength, but it didn’t have any overall benefits on physical function. Should you want to build muscle fast, injecting anabolic steroids will do that, as well as a whole host of other nasty, dangerous, undesirable things. And anyway, you also risk infertility, thereby decreasing your evolutionary fitness.

“For most men, declining testosterone is not a health issue,” says Pacey. “But it’s made into a health issue when they’re told there is a replacement and that doctors are willing to prescribe it. Men get old. We should deal with it in a graceful way.” Ageing well requires consistent, healthy actions.

There is no shot in the arm. ■



DO YOU HAVE LOW T?

IT'S RARE, BUT IT STILL HAPPENS. ASSESS YOUR RISK

ARE YOU LETHARGIC?

We all get tired – but do you still feel drained of energy and enthusiasm even after a restful weekend, or a solid night's sleep?

HAS YOUR BODY SHAPE CHANGED?

A dad bod is rarely a symptom of a medical issue. But it could be if you notice fat around your middle or chest when you've never been prone to it.

DO YOU HAVE ERECTILE PROBLEMS?

Extremely low T levels will keep you limp. But explore psychological factors, too. If you don't always want sex after a tough week, that's normal.



“THE IDEA THAT LOW T IS A PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE IS NOT FUELLED BY THE SCIENCE”

An aerial photograph of a dragon boat team consisting of five men in black athletic gear, paddling a long, narrow boat with a red and white hull. The boat is moving across a body of water with a shimmering, sun-dappled surface. The boat has 'NOS' and '4' printed on its side. The title 'A Stand-Up Guy' is overlaid in large white serif font.

A Stand-Up Guy

A surprising test of speed, stamina and coordination, stand-up paddle-boarding is an intense sport that's making waves.

We sent our man to the Dragon World Championships in France to find out if it can really deliver a full-body workout at a stroke

BY JUSTIN GUTHRIE

STAND-UP PADDLE-BOARDING (SUP) can look a little tame. Tranquil backdrops, lapping waters, a lone paddler gazing into the middle distance: it's basically canoeing for the Instagram influencer. But there's another kind of SUP that burns your core, leaves your shoulders in bits and tests your balance, coordination and stamina. This is the world of SUP racing, and I am its newest inhabitant.

Balancing at the tip of a four-person board, I'm jostling for position with hulking eastern Europeans at the Dragon World Championships on Lake Annecy in south-eastern France. More precisely, I am up the proverbial creek de merde. Before I arrived a day ago as part of Team Nike Swim, the championships' headline partner, I'd done a bit of paddle-boarding – but the 30 minutes I spent floating across the Swan River in Perth don't seem relevant in this semi-final. Instead, it's the advice of Martin Letourneur, a Nike Swim paddle-boarder and the anchor of our team, that I try to remember: "Whatever happens at the start, you must give yourself room to paddle."

In an attempt to secure myself some space, I nudge the Team Latvia board an inch with my paddle. Bad move. My bulkier Latvian opposite number is staring at me. "Don't push me," he intones, "or I'll push you". But more about him later.

SINKING FEELING

Maybe I shouldn't be surprised that it's all being taken so seriously. SUP is suddenly making waves. The Statista Research Department estimates that the industry is worth as much as \$15.3bn by 2020, double its valuation just four years ago.

The Dragon World Championships are the high-water mark of that growth. The world's finest paddlers of boards have assembled for the competition's third iteration at Lake Annecy. The morning before the racing begins,

Letourneur, who is from Nice, guides me through the basics. Before the actual paddling, naturally enough, comes the standing up. "Start on your knees," he advises me. "You must be familiar with the board before you can stand."

When I'm finally permitted to get to my feet, Letourneur watches as I bend my arms to paddle, like a vertical rowing stroke. He is not impressed. First, my hands are in the wrong places. Rather than holding the paddle like an oar, he says, I should rest one hand across the top and grip it halfway down with the other. That feels natural enough, but I'm still making a rookie error. Letourneur insists that, instead of starting the stroke with a bend at the elbow, I need to lock my arms and plunge the paddle as far ahead as I can reach, before pulling back, simultaneously rotating my centre. It's rough on the shoulders and core, but it makes sense. I am propelled further with every paddle.

After half an hour of refining my stroke, a foghorn sounds to signal the start of our first race. In all the excitement of being on the water, I hadn't given much thought to the competition, but I'm looking forward to it. I feel as though I have the technique locked down – in theory, at least. Letourneur seems like a pro, and the sun is shining. What could possibly go wrong? Letourneur puts our teammates Kim and Lucy at the front of the paddle but has "reserved" the spot just ahead of him at the back of the board for me. I have a sneaking feeling that this is the paddle-boarding equivalent of shunting a weekend footy weak link to the back-pocket.

If Letourneur's formation was an attempt at damage limitation, it doesn't work. While our rivals' paddles flash by in one smooth movement, our rhythm is all at sea. Letourneur desperately tries to keep us in time with shouts of "Up, up, up!" but our uneven tempo is rocking the board, causing us to fall to our knees >

ALL ABOARD:
IN A SPORT THAT
PRIZES TIMING,
TEAMWORK
IS CRUCIAL.

HELL OR HIGH WATER:
COMPETITORS
JOSTLING IN THE
HEAT OF BATTLE.

Make A Stand

DIFFERENT STROKES FOR DIFFERENT FOLKS? WE DON'T THINK SO. HERE'S LETOURNEUR'S FOUR-PART GUIDE TO THE PERFECT PADDLE

A

Stand tall, with a bend in your knees and your feet shoulder-width apart. Grip your paddle in both hands: one hand resting across the top, the other gripping halfway down, with your palm facing your body.



B

Straightening your arms, bring the blade across your body and bury it in the water as far ahead of you as you can comfortably reach – don't lose your balance. Keep your eyes fixed on the horizon.



C

Twist and rotate from your core, sharply dragging the blade back in parallel with your board until you've reached your feet. Four short strokes are more efficient than two long ones.



D

Then, in one fluid movement, twist the blade away from your body and move it back to the front as you lift it out of the water. Ignore the first feelings of muscle burn and repeat.



with alarming regularity. My elbows are bent and, in the storm of the moment, I ignore all of the lessons I learned mere minutes ago. We finish dead last. The knockout rounds don't start until tomorrow, but our seeding will take a hit, pitting us against more difficult opposition.

Defeat has flushed away all feelings of apathy. The competitive streak has kicked in, and we're desperate to improve. We beg Letourneur to take us out for a team training session. Tempo and cornering are the crucial elements: with less frequent, more powerful strokes, we are able to stay in unison, and Letourneur, seeing how useless our collective balance is, decides to take charge of turns. While he steers against the change of direction, the rest of us drop to our knees and paddle from the inside out.

STROKE OF GENIUS

Inspired by Letourneur's coaching, we improve in our next race – a very plucky second to last. Our photographer, James, runs over. "You guys look great," he says. "You'd look even better if you actually started winning, though." We train until the sun dips beyond the surrounding mountains and the storm clouds begin to roll in. An ominous sign? Not according to Letourneur. "The rain will make the lake warmer if you fall in," he says.

The next day, we rise early, full of nervous energy. My Latvian friend is getting in the zone with shuttle sprints. I decide to stick to

café au lait. Letourneur somehow seems the most relaxed, even though he has already completed an 11km solo race this morning (he finished second out of 120). To advance to the semi-finals, we have to finish in the top three of our eight-team quarter-final; place any lower than that and we'll be lumped in with the rest of the losers for a chaotic "repêchage" race, the final life raft of qualification.

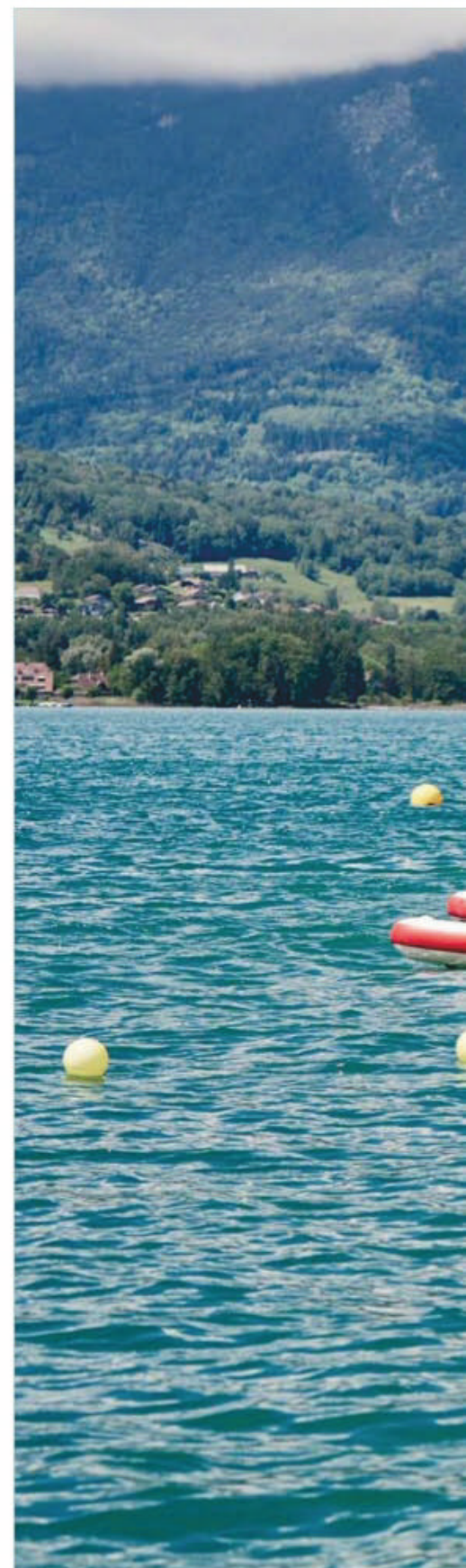
Desperate to make amends for yesterday's debacle, we start strongly and go into the first corner in second place. Three of us drop to our knees, as practised, and paddle in time as Letourneur steers the turn. We nail it – but as Letourneur calls us to our feet, the Atlas Russia team's board in third crashes into us. Kim, unsteady at the front, loses her balance and falls in. Letourneur quickly scoops her up, but it's too late. We've lost ground and can't recover. We finish sixth. An improvement, sure, but not enough.

Ours was the last of the quarter-finals, so we have just 10 minutes to prepare for the repêchage race. Still panting, Letourneur decides on a tactical reshuffle for our final roll of the dice. Kim moves back to the more stable middle, and I shift up to the front. From back pocket to centre-half forward – or, at least, that's what I tell myself.

Whether it's my starring role up front or Letourneur's freedom to paddle without me flailing in front of him, we'll never know, but it turns out to be

our smoothest race yet. We fly around the corners, our blades flashing in unison, and we even keep our composure to hold off a late charge from the German Nike Swim team. We finish in second place and secure a spot in the semi-finals.

Fists pumping, adrenaline surging, I am surprised to notice that the buzz – and the burn – is up there with that of my best sporting memories. We barely have time to step off the board, however, until we're climbing back on it for our semi-final. Leaning on his paddle at the start line, Letourneur is visibly exhausted from three straight races (and the effort of carrying



PHOTOGRAPHY: JAMES CARNEGIE; RED PADDLE CO



**“ADRENALINE SURGING,
THE BURN IS UP THERE
WITH MY BEST
SPORTING MEMORIES”**

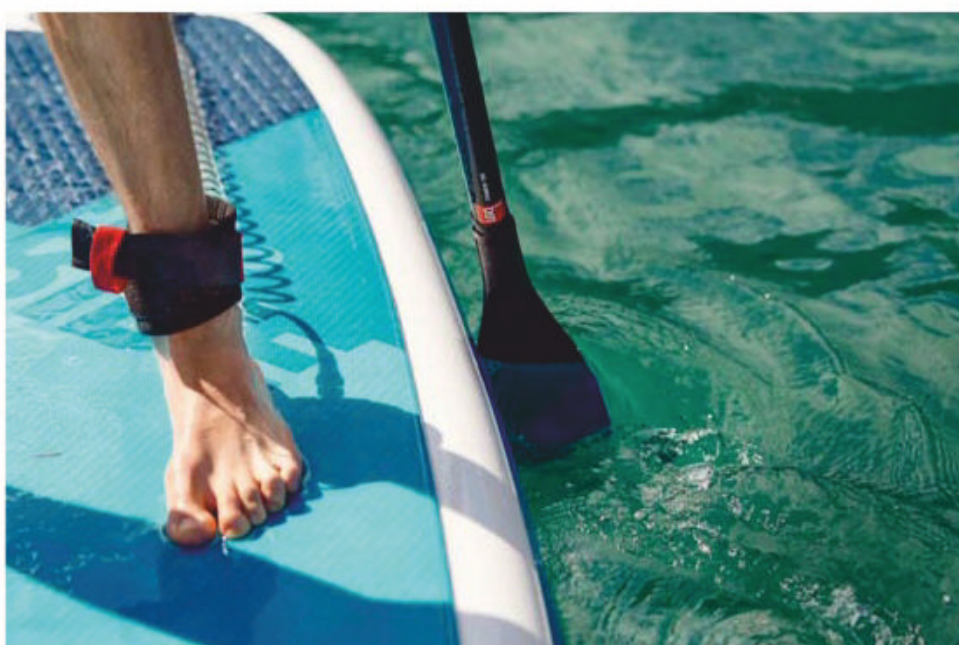
an entire team), while my confidence is frozen by the icy stare of that Latvian rival.

We're a full paddle-length behind the Latvian and his teammates within five strokes, and we seem to be going backwards until we cross the finish line in last place. Letourneur has just enough energy to flip the board and send us into the lake. We may have arrived at the championships hoping to make a different kind of splash, but paddle-boarding is a sport more challenging for body and mind than you might imagine. So, should you find yourself feeling listless on the beach, stand up and get paddling. ■



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THE INSTABILITY OF WATER MAKES SIMPLY STAYING UPRIGHT A CORE WORKOUT.

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YOUR MONTHLY GUIDE TO WHAT'S
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BECAUSE FIT IS THE NEW RICH



DEMON DESIRE

Rising star Alex de Minaur is chasing next-level fitness - including a brawnier frame - to crack tennis's top echelon

DANIEL WILLIAMS THOM RIGNEY



FORMER NO. 1 ANDY MURRAY HAS SAID OF THE YOUNG GUN: "I WISH I WAS AS GROWN UP AS ALEX DE MINAUR ON THE TENNIS COURT".

WHATEVER IT TAKES

In pursuit of a breakthrough showing in a major tournament on the world's most competitive circuit, Alex de Minaur has learned to love the grind of training

When Alex de Minaur turns to the matter of his plans for the afternoon, you detect in his tone a mix of determination and dread. And no wonder. Shortly, he'll board a flight from Melbourne to Brisbane, where he'll tackle what he calls "a little bit of a track session" in oppressive heat.

"So, today we have a pyramid," says the fresh-faced de Minaur, the world No. 18 at time of writing. "I'll run 500 metres, rest for 30 seconds. Then one kay, rest for 30 seconds. Then two kay, rest for 30. Then 1 kay, rest for 30." There's one more stage but the line cuts out momentarily and you don't catch it, though presumably it's another 500m effort. Before you can check, he's moved on. "I'll be going hard," he says. "It's going to be a bit of a brutal session."

Watching de Minaur darting all over the courts of the world, combining hare-like speed with camel-like stamina, it would be easy to believe that his first love was the pursuit of fitness, and that the tennis caper came next. But not so.

"For me, it's always been tennis first. And I must admit, growing up, the fitness side of things... it was probably the worst part of the job," says de Minaur, who won

three ATP events last year to crack the world's top 20 and raise supporters' hopes that this young warrior with the temperament of a seasoned campaigner has all the requisite qualities to rise to the top in the post-Federer-Nadal-Djokovic triopoly – if not sooner.

It's not enough, he says, merely to endure the sweat sessions that leave him doubled over. If that's all you're doing then your

progress is going to peter out. "So, I've come to love the grind – the hard work and the feeling that you've done everything in your power to put yourself in a position to perform at your best," he says. "If I didn't like what I was doing in training then there'd be a very slim chance that I'd be able to keep getting myself out there."

Back in January, injury stopped de Minaur playing in the Australian Open, just as



“One of my main goals has been to get a little bigger and stronger, without losing my speed”

COMPLETE PACKAGE

Though nowadays known in tennis circles as “Demon” (short for Speed Demon), de Minaur wasn’t the fast kid in school. “My speed’s something that’s developed over the years,” he says. “Growing up, I was never that quick. I had big feet and wasn’t too coordinated. But slowly, I guess, I grew into my body. And speed was one of the things that came along with that.”

Not being fast his whole life has helped him, he says. Before he became electric he was forced to develop his anticipation – the knack for sensing the depth and direction of an opponent’s shots in advance. Now he has both qualities – the eye-catching and the substantive. It’s like the thoughtful girl whose beauty flowers only after she finishes high school.

De Minaur is never satisfied with how he’s playing. In his mind the question is always: what else can I do to be better? Recently, he used tennis’s all-too-brief off-season to target his physique. Because while no observer could fail to notice de Minaur’s strengths, there was a consensus his strokes lacked the pop that would allow him to beat lesser opponents quickly, obviating the need to wear down each and every one of them over a period of hours.

“One of the main goals for me has been to get a little bit bigger and stronger, without losing the main aspect of my game, which is speed,” he says.

So, either side of Christmas, de Minaur hit the weights, focusing initially on moving heavy loads in low rep ranges before switching

to more explosive lifting as the season drew nearer. His efforts plonked 2kg of muscle onto his 183-cm frame, lifting his weight to 74kg with a body-fat reading of a tick over 13 per cent. “I’ve been able to see the results,” says de Minaur. Not that the optics matter to him. (Much.) “Everything I do is to help me on the tennis court.”

It’s a vexed issue, the value of brawn to the ball-sport athlete. Would Roger Federer be a better player if he added 5cm to his fine-boned arms? Highly unlikely. Has any player ever rocketed up the rankings as a result of filling out his tee-shirt more snugly? It’s hard to think of one, though Rafael Nadal seems more potent when competing at the heavier end of his weight range. As a reason why one guy hits the ball harder than another, arm-and-pec size comes a distant third behind timing and racquet-head speed. And power’s but one piece of the jigsaw.

For someone like de Minaur, however, the case for getting larger rests as much on psychology as physicality. On court, feeling strong fosters a sense of authority from which confidence and I’m-the-man body language flow. At the ATP Cup in January, de Minaur bossed then world No. 1 Nadal for the better part of two sets before fading. He was a *presence* on the court, rather than a 20-year-old upstart playing out of his skin.

Long term, how far can he go? He’s never going to be a Mozart of the court like Federer. But a style and level of success to match, say, David Ferrer or even Lleyton Hewitt (a mentor cut from the same cloth) looks achievable. Federer, Nadal

and Djokovic are all nestled in their thirties. The tennis world is about to open its arms to those good enough and desperate enough to step up. “Look, the way I see things, if I can just keep on improving everyday then the results will show,” de Minaur says. “I’m a strong believer in focusing on the present.”

PICK AND CHOOSE

De Minaur joined the game of life on 17 February, 1999. Wielding a racquet from age three, he split his formative years between the southern Sydney suburb of Carss Park and Alicante, Spain, the homeland of his mother. Australia and Spain: both tennis strongholds, each with a distinct culture. Wisely, de Minaur set about cherry-picking.

Practising in Spain, he recalls, “we made sure that whenever we stepped out on court it was always a very high-level, high-intensity session”. The key was quality rather than duration. “And as soon as we were off-court we would try to be as chilled as possible”. In contrast, the Australian way puts a premium on work ethic: how much time the athlete is prepared to spend honing his game under a blazing sun. “You start early and you’re just going bang and bang and more bang,” says de Minaur. “I think I’ve struck a balance.”

Suffering for your sport is just that – suffering – but there’s nothing de Minaur would rather be doing. “I’ve always been really competitive,” he says. “And part of being competitive is doing everything in your power to be the best version of yourself. I never really liked fitness until I got it into my head that it’s something

that’s going to make my tennis better. I keep reminding myself that it’s for the greater good.”

BACK FOR MORE

The corollary of hard work is recovery, and here too de Minaur takes no shortcuts. The pillars of his game – brick-wall defence, court-speed, indefatigability – would have crumbled by now were he neglecting to give his body what it needs.

For de Minaur, a gruelling match or practice is bookended by an ice bath or physio session. Attention to flexibility through stretching is a must for maintaining agility, he adds. For subduing muscle soreness he uses Swisse High Strength Magnesium Powder. “You can work hard but if you don’t have proper recovery then the following day you’re going to be useless,” he says. “Your body is not going to be able to work as hard again so that’s wasting a crucial day.”

Wholefoods are his go-to. “I don’t go overboard trying to go vegan or experiment with different diets,” he says. “I try for balance and steer clear of soft drink and anything fried.” Breakfast is an acai bowl, which fuels his first session. Afterwards, scrambled eggs begin the repair process. The afternoon slog requires a two-dinner riposte, at 5pm and 8pm, each comprising protein and vegetables.

Would he be up for a celebratory cheat meal after, say, reaching the last four at Roland-Garros? “I’d go big,” he says. “Something along the lines of a pepperoni pizza, a big Coke and then dessert. And you can’t miss with a packet of lollies.” ■

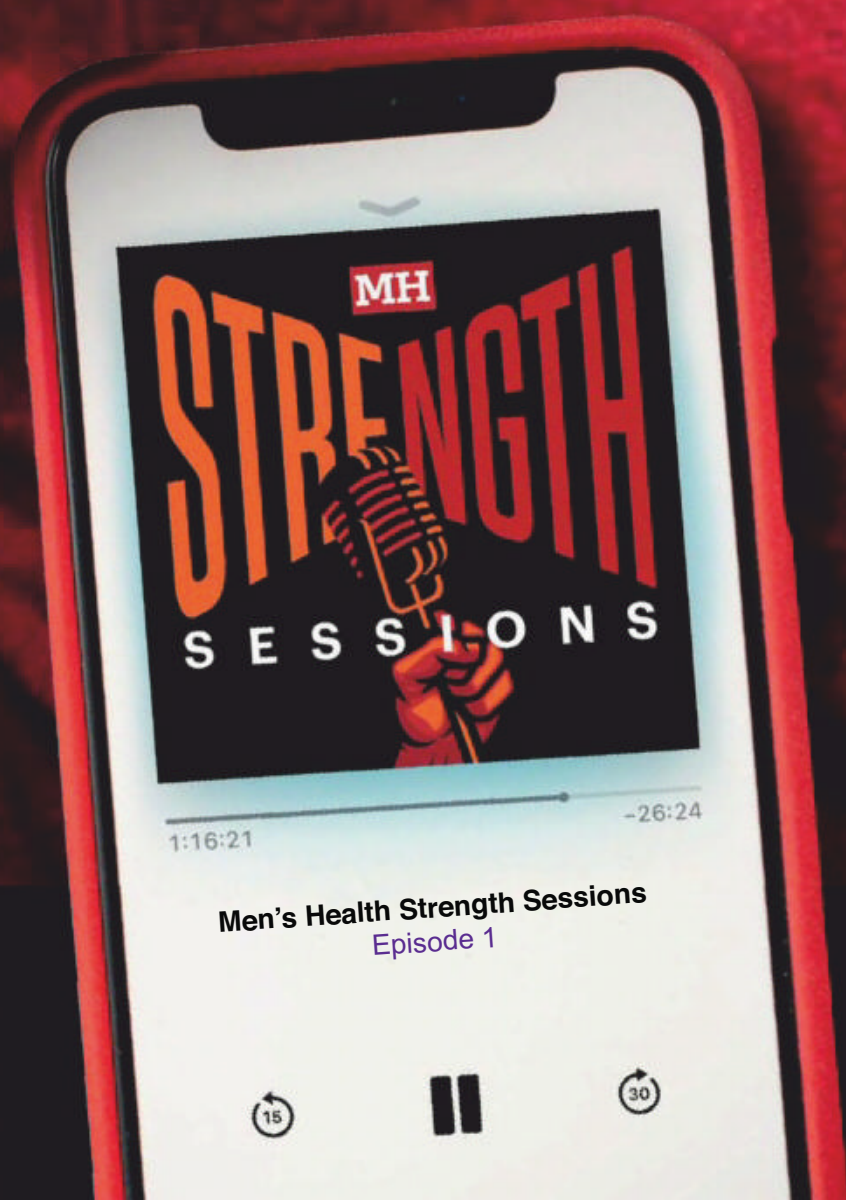
Alex de Minaur is a Swisse ambassador

his form was peaking and his on-court intensity appeared to be spiking clear off the charts. As a result, his first grand-slam appearance for 2020 will be at the French Open, beginning May 24. Is he ready to threaten at the only major tournament played on clay, not his favourite surface? Why not? He’s got everything except what might be called a ‘big’ game. And, as it happens, he’s working on that, too.

NEW PODCAST

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5000 MG OF CREATINE

Sports dietitians say that consuming this amount of the nutrient every day will supercharge your workouts with strength and power. That's a lofty goal - unless you know the shortcut

BRITTANY RISHER

Why creatine matters

"Creatine serves as a fuel source for short-duration, high-burst-type activity," says Jose Antonio, an associate professor of exercise and sport science at Nova Southeastern University. If you sprint, lift or do HIIT, creatine can likely help you do those things better.

How much does the NHMRC recommend?

None, but that's only because creatine isn't an essential nutrient, meaning you don't need to consume it to live well.

What we recommend

About 5000 milligrams daily over the course of a month for long-term performance goals. This amount will increase the levels of phosphocreatine inside your muscles and allow for optimal energy production, says Chad Kerkick, director of the Exercise and Performance Nutrition Laboratory at Lindenwood University.

To hit your daily goal of creatine, you'd need to eat 1105 grams of beef daily - that's roughly 16 porterhouses over the course of a week. Don't do that.

How much do I have to eat?

"You'd have to eat an ungodly amount of meat," says Antonio, to hit that number. More specifically, you'd have to eat 1105 grams of beef or salmon a day - more than eight times the amount of protein from meat suggested by health authorities. Do *not* eat 1105g of beef or salmon in a day.

So... how do I hit the target?

Take a supplement - and make sure it's the right kind. "There have been no well-controlled clinical trials to show any other form of creatine is better than creatine monohydrate, and usually other forms are more expensive," Kerkick says. Seek out a product with third-party credentials like the HASTA "Certified Product", which ensures the product contains what the label says it does and that it has been tested for contaminants and banned substances. Even if you're not about to be drug-tested, it's a peace-of-mind thing.



Is the Creatine "Loading Phase" Safe?

YES, the loading phase - or taking a superdose of 20,000 milligrams of creatine for four or five days - is safe. But "it isn't necessary," says nutritionist Chris Mohr. "Research suggests that after 30 days, results from using creatine end up the same for strength gains." So if you need faster results (e.g., five days vs. 30 days), then loading could work. Up to you. Though our advice: play the long game.



THE 6-MOVE TOTAL-BODY BLAST

You've done bench-presses before - but not like this. Here you're blending classic muscle moves with kilojoule-burning bodyweight exercises so you can take your physique high-def. Do this workout three times a week. On off days, do 20 push-ups, 20 dumbbell rows per arm and 20 bodyweight squats

SEAN GARNER AND EBENEZER SAMUEL KAT WIRSING

The Workout

Perform the moves in order. Do 4 sets of 10-12 reps of each exercise. Rest for 45 seconds between each set, 1 minute between each exercise.

1 Overhead Split Squat

Stand holding a medium-weight dumbbell overhead with your left hand. Step your left foot backward, lowering into a reverse lunge. Without moving your feet, straighten your knees to stand up (A). This is the start. Bend at the knees, lowering your torso until your right thigh is parallel to the floor (B); straighten back up. That's 1 rep. Switch sides every set.

EB SAYS:

"If you find you're arching your back, hold the dumbbell at your shoulder instead - and tighten up your abs."



2 Hip-Lift Alternating Floor Press

Lie on your back, dumbbells at your chest, feet flat on the floor near your butt. Squeeze your glutes and lift your torso; lift your left leg. This is the start. Lift the right dumbbell, then lower it; repeat with the left dumbbell. That's 1 rep. Switch legs every set.

EB SAYS:

"Lift your hips only as high as they'll go when you squeeze your glutes."



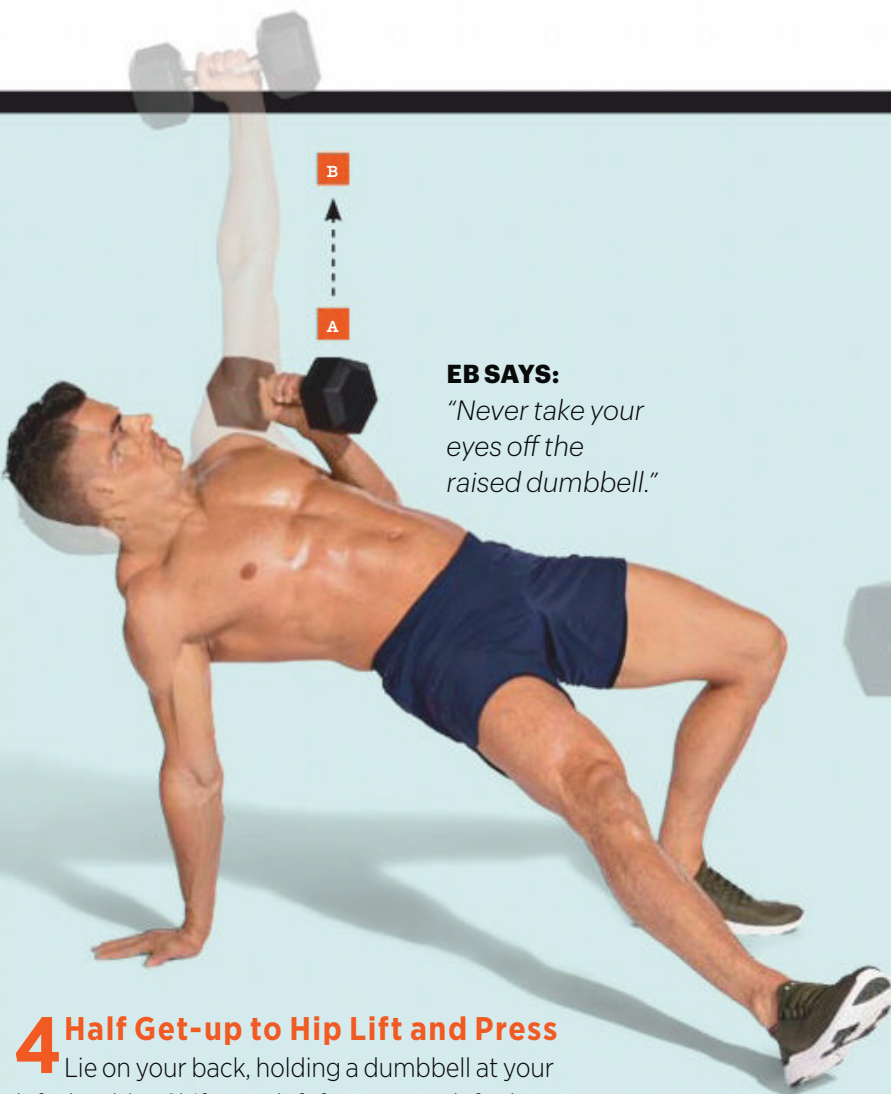
3 Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift to Row

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent, holding medium-weight dumbbells at your sides. Keeping your core tight, push your butt back and hinge your torso forward. Lower until you feel a stretch in your hamstrings or your torso is parallel to the floor, whichever comes first (A). Squeeze your abs, then row the dumbbells to your hips (B). Lower them, and straighten back up. That's 1 rep.

EB SAYS:

"Take your time on the deadlift; aim to take 2-3 seconds to lower your torso."



**EB SAYS:**

"Never take your eyes off the raised dumbbell."

4 Half Get-up to Hip Lift and Press

Lie on your back, holding a dumbbell at your left shoulder. Shift your left foot to your left glute. This is the start. Drive your torso up, keeping your right hand on the floor. Squeeze your glutes, driving your hips in line with your torso (A). Raise the dumbbell (B) and lower it. Return to the start. That's 1 rep; do 2 sets per side.

**6 Bear Rotation and Press**

Get on all fours, knees off the floor, core tight, a light dumbbell in your left hand. Row the dumbbell to your chest. Lift your right foot off the floor and shift it under your left leg (A). As you rotate your chest towards the ceiling, keep the dumbbell close to your chest. Once your chest faces the ceiling, place your right foot next to your left, tighten your core and press the dumbbell upward (B). Reverse the move to return to the start. That's 1 rep. Do 2 sets on each side.

**5 Side-Plank Side Press**

Set up in a right-side plank, right forearm and right foot on the floor, core tight, with a light dumbbell in your left hand, held at your chest (A). Tighten your abs and keep your hips level; press the dumbbell straight up (B); lower it back to your chest.

EB SAYS:

"Squeeze your shoulder blades."

EB SAYS:

"Pinch your shoulder blades when your chest faces the ceiling, protecting your shoulders and getting some extra back work."



NFL'S FITSPO ALL-STAR

DeMarcus Ware's time terrorising NFL quarterbacks is over, but that's not going to stop the retired Dallas Cowboys star from tearing it up in the gym

 CLARENCE E. HILL JR  ARTURO OLMOS

This isn't how DeMarcus Ware wanted the morning to go. It's 6:30 when he strides into his personal gym in Trophy Club, Texas, already a half hour behind on a crowded schedule.





WARE'S STATE-OF-THE-ART GYM INCLUDES A JAMMER (ABOVE), ADJUSTABLE DUMBBELLS (FAR LEFT), AND A NONMOTORISED TREADMILL (LEFT).

His eyes dart from a clock to a treadmill to his Jammer (a steel cage with two giant handles), then back to the clock. He nods his shiny, bald head. "We all make time for what's important," Ware says, collapsing to the floor and bending his knee into a quad stretch. "And I need this. It's my 45 minutes before the chaos of the day."

And it's Ware's only chance to unleash his own chaos, a daily dose of physicality he's maintained since he retired from the NFL in 2017. During his 12 seasons in the league, as a pass-rushing star for the Dallas Cowboys and a Super Bowl winner with the Denver Broncos, the linebacker spent his days hurling his 193-cm, 118-kg frame at opponents.

Ware did it as well as anyone, finishing eighth on the NFL's career sack list. But these days, the job is less about muscle, more about megawatt smiles. At 37, he's

early into his second career, rebranding himself as equal parts OG fitfluencer Shaun T and *Good Morning America*'s Michael Strahan. In 2018, he competed on *Dancing with the Stars*. He also makes occasional appearances on NFL Network, flying wherever the Cowboys play to talk about his old team.

It's a new world Ware loves, but tackling is unnecessary roughness here. When you spent more than a decade living for the next hit, meetings are instant boredom. Ware often fidgets during sit-down meetings – and after this workout, his day is full of them. He checks in with his team about his new iOS fitness app, *Driven 2 Win*, and he takes calls for various video projects. Before all that, it helps to hit, well, something. "This," Ware says, "has replaced football as my physical outlet. I'm not able to be out there competing like I used to

against the guys anymore. So, I do this."

He's hoping to transform that outlet into a business. Since leaving football, he's built an Instagram following that's approaching 1 million – and although some beg him to get back into his cleats, many also want an ex-NFL badass's training advice. He delivers with regular IG workouts as well as his new app, and he just got certified as a personal trainer himself. He already works with a handful of one-on-one clients out of his gym, and by this spring he'll open the space to the public under the name 3Volt. (He has an afternoon meeting about that today, too. Yes, that means more sitting.) His morning workouts double as a testing ground for exercises he'll use in 3Volt training sessions. "Everybody wants to be fit," says Ware. "Now I can be a captain in their lives after motivating my

teammates and being a champion on the football field. I want to train and teach them how to get the right mind-set to go tackle the day."

But right now he just really wants to tackle that Jammer. His head already dotted with sweat, he makes his way over to the cage, wedges his broad-shouldered frame between its handles, squats backward, then, like a coiled spring, explodes forward. The Jammer rattles, the sound reverberating through his 460-square-metre space.

He grinds out three sets and follows those up with dumbbell rows, med-ball slams, tyre flips and dumbbell curls. Finally, he jogs to the treadmill, finishing off his workout with 10 15-second all-out sprints. After the last one, he steps off the machine, heaving. "Now I can go out and tackle the day." ■

BETWEEN SETS

Go-to cheat meal?

I would eat ice cream every day if I could.

Best song on your gym playlist?

"Open Safe" by Lil Wayne. It's the beat.

Childhood workout hero?

I would watch videos of former Mr Olympia Ronnie Coleman – his regimen, what he ate.

Gym pet peeve?

Someone on the phone sitting there for five minutes on the bench press.

Who plays you in a biopic?

Can I say the Incredible Hulk, Bruce Banner?

Favourite exercise?

The power clean. So much explosion.

Most-hated exercise?

Squats. I had three back surgeries, so any leg day for me is hard. I only did it when I had to.

BREAK OF BRAUN

This is the light-speed bodyweight circuit Ware does in his hotel room when he's on the road. Give it a try

1 TEMPO PUSH-UP

Set up in push-up position, wrists slightly wider than shoulder width, abs and glutes tight. Bend at the elbows, lowering your chest until it's 2cm from the floor; take 3 seconds to do this. Pause, then explode back up. That's 1 rep; do 15.

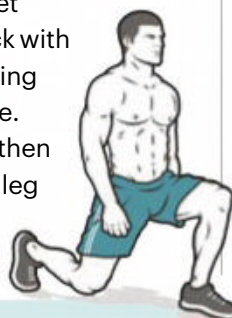


2 PLANK

Set up in a forearm plank, abs and glutes tight. Hold for 30-60 seconds. Want more of a challenge? Add an alternating reach, lifting 1 hand in front of you; keep your hips and shoulders square as you do this.

3 PAUSE REVERSE LUNGE

Stand with your feet together. Step back with your left leg, lowering into a reverse lunge. Hold for 1 second, then push off your right leg and rise. Do 15 on each leg.



4 SINGLE-LEG CHAIR SQUAT

Stand with your back to a chair, left foot off the floor. Bend your right knee and push your butt back, slowly lowering your butt to the chair. Put both feet on the floor and stand back up. That's 1 rep; do a strict 15 per side.



SHAKE IT UP!

Your post-workout protein shake should taste like victory, not another endurance test. Mix up your usual water-and-powder combo with these fit-man-approved takes

LeBron's Chocolate Plant-Protein Smoothie

The Blender: **LeBron James**,
NBA living legend

Tastes Like: A banana split with peanut butter

Biggest Benefits: 26 grams of protein, heart-healthy fats and enough energy to withstand endless Michael Jordan comparisons

What You'll Need:

- 1 packet chocolate plant-protein powder
- 1 frozen banana
- 1 heaped Tbsp peanut butter
- 250-300ml unsweetened almond milk
- Handful ice cubes

How to Make It:

In a blender, add the first 3 ingredients and puree until well combined. Then add the almond milk and ice until the desired consistency is achieved.

Nutrition per shake:

1860 kilojoules,
26g protein, 53g carbs
(6g fibre), 15g fat



De-clump Your Shake

Use a blender that can hold twice the volume of what you'll be shaking, says Richard Ludescher, Ph.D., a food scientist at Rutgers. Aeration agitates protein clumps.



Berry Blast Super Shake

The Blender: **Brian St. Pierre**, dietitian,
director of performance nutrition
at Precision Nutrition

Tastes Like: The height of summer

Biggest Benefits: Six grams of fibre and the pride of learning how to chug your fruits and vegetables

What You'll Need:

- 1 scoop vanilla or strawberry protein powder (your choice)
- 1 loosely packed cup baby spinach
- 1 cup frozen mixed berries
- 1 tsp ground flaxseed
- 180-250ml water, plain dairy milk or plant-based milk

How to Make It:

In a blender, combine the first 4 ingredients and puree until well combined. Then add the liquid until the desired consistency is achieved.

Per shake: (with 180ml of light milk) 1210 kilojoules, 31g protein, 31g carbs (6g fibre), 7g fat



Sweet Green Smoothie with Honey

The Blender: **Kevin Curry**, creator of the Instagram account @FitMenCook and author of the Fit Men Cook cookbook

Tastes Like: A quick tropical holiday

Biggest Benefits: A payload of fibre, a buzz from the green tea and a hue resembling the Hulk

What You'll Need:

- 1 1 cup spinach
- 2 ½ avocado
- 3 1 kiwi, peeled
- 4 1 Tbsp matcha green-tea powder
- 5 1 Tbsp raw honey
- 6 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 7 250-200ml unsweetened almond milk

How to Make It:

In a blender, combine the first 6 ingredients and puree until well combined. Then add the almond milk until the desired consistency is achieved.

Per shake: 1305 kilojoules, 5g protein, 44g carbs (8g fibre), 5g fat



The Arnold

The Blender: **Arnold Schwarzenegger**, actor, politician, bodybuilding G.O.A.T.

Tastes Like: Muscle growth

Biggest Benefits: A powerhouse of protein, plus brain-boosting choline from the whole egg – and permission to shout, “Get to da choppa!” before blending

What You'll Need:

- 1 250ml unsweetened almond milk
- 2 7ml tart cherry juice
- 3 1 banana
- 4 1 scoop protein powder (your choice)
- 5 1 raw egg (shell optional)

How to Make It:

In a blender, combine all the ingredients and puree until smooth.

Per shake: 1530 kilojoules, 32g protein, 39g carbs (4g fibre), 13g fat



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These two reigned



BEST SPLURGE:

Vitamix A2500

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BEST VALUE:

NutriBullet Blender Combo

Though this doesn't have a blend-time setting like the Vitamix, the base holds handy to-go cups (included). **\$249;** harveynorman.com.au

ONE WORD ANSWER

QUESTION

Which sweet science can help fight off stress and knock out depression?

ANSWER

Boxing

SOME TIME IN THE 1930S, a group of US scientists stepped into a small, stuffy room to install a microphone, then stepped back out again. Guards escorted a young prisoner to a chair in the chamber and strapped him down, before leaving him there alone. The mic was on. Poison gas was then a “new method of capital punishment”, Martin Luther King wrote, and the researchers were curious to hear how a man would react “in this novel situation”. So – as the legend goes – the lethal pellet was released. “Gas curled upward” towards its victim. And out of the speakers in the observation room came these words: “Save me, Joe Louis. Save me, Joe Louis . . .”

Boxing can be deadly. Since the late 19th century, at least 1900 pugilists have died as a result of injuries sustained in the ring. But as he breathed in the lethal fumes, the desperate man in Dr King’s account called

out not for God, not his mother. He sought protection in Louis, the then heavyweight champion of the world.

Boxing can save as well as end lives, as men as disparate as Frank Bruno and Prince Harry have affirmed. For Bruno and the prince, boxing was their salvation from mental breakdown. Researchers increasingly acknowledge the emotional benefits of the sport, with “the sweet science” now used to help sufferers of ADHD and depression, as well as to boost self-esteem in LGBT communities. A Stanford study also found that boxers’ “physical intimacy” in the ring promotes “closeness” between people of different backgrounds. Meanwhile, the sport demands constant motion, speed and

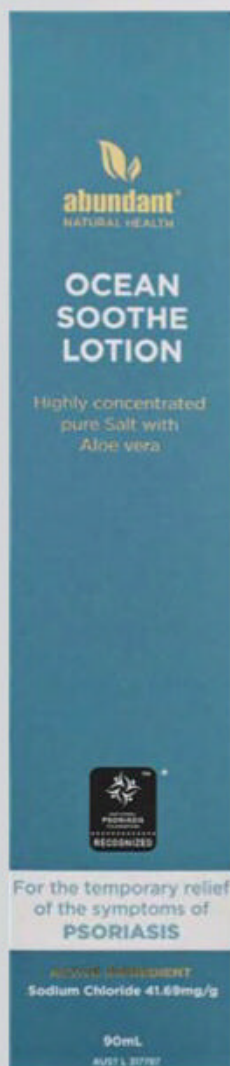
strength. As well as knocking out stress and anxiety, it can enhance your cardiovascular health, total-body fitness and weight-loss efforts.

Amateur boxing – which requires the wearing of protective headgear and more padded gloves, and is limited to fewer, shorter rounds – has a far lower risk of brain injury than the professional version. An Australian study found that it had “acute injury rates comparable to, and often lower than, those found in other contact and non-contact sports”. For those unwilling to square up against a sparring partner just yet, fitness boxing offers many of the same benefits – from improved balance and endurance to an elevated mood – without the risk of a fist crashing into your skull. Either way, lift those hands high and ring in some real results. ■

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