

# ROBERT IRVINE

MAGAZINE

June 2016

*Nothing is Impossible*

## RETHINKING THE BURGER

BEYOND BEEF  
WITH THE  
AMERICAN  
CLASSIC

## + SLEEP

Why It's Even  
More Important  
Than Hitting  
The Gym

## MIKE O'HEARN

Wisdom From  
The Titan of the  
Fitness Industry

## THE REAL FORREST GUMP

The Harrowing True  
Story of Medal of  
Honor Recipient  
Sammy Lee Davis

## KETTLEBELLS

*Get Functionally Strong and Slash Fat With One Piece of Equipment*



# ROBERT IRVINE MAGAZINE

Nothing is Impossible

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# INSIDE THE ISSUE

## ROBERT IRVINE MAGAZINE

JUNE 2016 /// Vol. 1, No. 2

### GETTING STARTED

**4 ROBERT'S LETTER** It's an honor to introduce you to one of my heroes.

### IN THE GYM

**5 PRO TIPS** When sleep trumps training.

**9 WORKOUT OF THE MONTH** A simple kettlebell routine to build strength and slash fat.

**12 GEAR** Hot weather picks.

### IN THE KITCHEN

**13 RECIPE** Brined chops with apple hash.

**14 RECIPE** Three-meat meatballs.

**15 GEAR** New gadgets and gift ideas for dad.

### FEATURES

**16 A MAN OF HONOR** Sgt. Sammy Lee Davis won the Congressional Medal of Honor for extraordinary valor in Vietnam. Read the story behind "The Real Forrest Gump".

**20 COVER STORY** Robert reimagines the burger just in time for summer. Go beyond beef with great new recipes featuring tuna, turkey, chicken, lamb, and salmon.

**26 INTERVIEW: MIKE O'HEARN** He has covered hundreds of magazines and possesses uncommon longevity. The ultimate fitness guru talks about getting started the right way.

**34 ASK US ANYTHING:** Health and fitness experts chime in on training after childbirth, how to block out negativity on social media, and getting your abs back after giving birth.

**38 WORDS TO LIVE BY** Parting motivation.



**THE REAL FORREST GUMP:** Sgt. Sammy Lee Davis poses for a photo in Vietnam, where his extraordinary valor earned him the Congressional Medal of Honor. Read his story starting on Pg. 16.

# MEET MY HEROES

My favorite part of this magazine: introducing you to the people who inspire me.

I met Sammy Lee Davis at one of Gary Sinise's recent Invincible Spirit Festivals. He was everything you would expect a Medal of Honor recipient to be: Humble almost to a fault, his every word and mannerism imbued with a deep respect and love for his country.

"The Medal of Honor has always made me stand a little taller and try to do the correct thing in life because I know the medal doesn't really belong to me," Davis said. "It belongs to all my brothers."

As you'll read in the story, "A Man of Honor" beginning on Pg. 16, Davis represents the very best that the American military has to offer. While gravely wounded in Vietnam, he continued to fight, rescued three of his brothers pinned down in a foxhole, and helped to repel a surprise enemy attack. You'll also learn why Davis is called, amongst other things, "The Real Forrest Gump".

Stories like Davis' reinforce for me the notion that support for our veterans is one of the most important responsibilities we all have as civilians. Despite his heroic actions in the face of odds that could have easily claimed his life, Davis was met with little besides scorn and ridicule from anti-war protestors when he returned home. Wherever you find yourself politically, I hope you can read his story and realize

that protesting a war and protesting a warrior are two very different things—and I'm proud that we've left much of the Vietnam-era ugliness in the past.

This issue also kicks off summer, so I wanted to share with you some of my favorite burger recipes that go beyond the conventional meat-and-cheese combinations. That story starts on Pg. 20.

I also took the opportunity to introduce you to a good friend of mine and someone I very much look up to in the world of fitness: Mike O'Hearn. Mike has been covering fitness magazines for the better part of three decades, and as he approaches 50, he's in better shape now than he's ever been. And yet, Mike hasn't forgotten what it means to be a beginner. In a lengthy interview starting on Pg. 26, Mike shares his best advice for people who are new to the world of weight training.



Stay up to date on everything in the world of Robert Irvine. Follow him on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

Without further ado, welcome to the second issue of *Robert Irvine Magazine*. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed putting it together.

Yours in health,



# SLEEP IN? OR HIT THE GYM?

With limited time in our schedules, we're sometimes faced with the dilemma of choosing between the iron or the sheets. Here's what to do when you want to push forward but still need rest. By Robert Kachko, ND



We've all heard that if we get up early to train that it energizes us for the rest of the day. And so you give it a try. If you're fortunate, it works and you're more productive throughout the day. If it doesn't, you shouldn't necessarily keep pushing the envelope until it clicks. You could, quite simply, just need more sleep. We quite literally can't

live without sleep, and yet societal pressures often force us to forego sufficient sleep in lieu of a perpetual need to accomplish more: make more money, have more friends, make more of ourselves—and get in better shape. This desire to acquire comes at tremendous cost though: less long-term quality of life. The quantity and quality of sleep we get

is connected to the dietary choices we make (which, not coincidentally, also has a bigger impact on your health and physique than exercise), and in a cyclical fashion those same dietary choices impact sleep.

Finding a way to break this cycle is a crucial step in regaining optimal health for those who get less-than-optimal rest.

# IN THE GYM: PRO TIPS

## What happens when we don't sleep enough

Too much (more than 9 hours) and too little (less than 7 hours) sleep are both associated with reduced health outcomes. In a review of 634,511 people from around the world, inadequate sleep was associated with an 89% increase in risk of obesity in children and a 55% increase in adults. Lack of sleep can impact optimal hormone levels, increase risk of diabetes, heart disease, and more. While the average adult needs about 7-8 hours of sleep per night, teenagers and children require more. That said, there truly is no such thing as average when it comes to individualized health, and everyone should aim to get the amount of sleep required to feel well rested throughout the day. If consistently sleeping 8 hours is not enough to accomplish that, it may be a good idea to explore other reasons for low energy levels (hormonal influences, excess weight, environmental toxicity, insufficient nutrient intake—especially iron and the B vitamins).

## What to do when tired: Exercise or Sleep?

Did you know that getting up early to exercise might actually **MAKE** you gain weight?

Yes, you read that correctly: you may be better off sleeping that extra hour than getting up early to go to the gym. That's not to downplay how crucial exercise is your health. But, stuck between the mythological Scylla and Charybdis of your morning routine, what are you to do? Though this may seem like an no-win dilemma, proper planning



Author Robert Kachko is a naturopathic physician. Learn more about him [HERE](#) and visit his Facebook page [HERE](#).

We've been conditioned to associate skipped workouts with failure. But if you're drained by the time you get to work, you might have to rethink your strategy.

and some tips on gaining restful sleep can spell a recipe for sustainable success.

Sleep deprivation is common, so helping patients get enough rest takes center stage in many treatment protocols. Evolving research shows us that our sleeping habits are a strong indicator of our ability to maintain a healthy body weight, controlling for other factors such as diet and exercise. This means that two people who eat the same quality and quantity of food, and burn the same number of calories through exercise, may have very different health outcomes based solely on the quantity and quality of their sleep.

Lack of sleep has been associated with decreased leptin levels, altered ability to handle glucose, and

elevated ghrelin/cortisol levels, all of which contribute to an elevated appetite.

In one study, 123 overweight and obese men and women who were fed a calorie restricted diet (which should have resulted in fat loss independent of other factors) over the course of at least 15 weeks were unable to lose sufficient weight if they didn't get enough sleep. The authors predicted that just 1 hour of sleep loss over that time resulted in 0.7 kg of extra weight over the same period (which equates to 5.3 pounds extrapolated over one year). These types of results are staggering for anyone who has dealt with the frustration of being unable to keep weight off in a sustainable way.

Equally important to how much we sleep is our ability to obtain



# IN THE GYM: PRO TIPS

uninterrupted sleep.

Another study showed that those who experienced more fragmented sleep (defined by at least 5 “wake episodes” per night—normal being defined as 4 or less) strongly contributed to magnitude of weight loss. Though the mechanism is not yet fully understood, the study did find dysfunction of the primary control center of our endocrine system: the hypothalamus-pituitary-adrenal axis. There’s also no such thing as sleep debt we can catch up on: It has been shown that just one night of fragmented sleep can cause reduction in REM sleep and dysfunctional insulin control.

While maintaining an active lifestyle is an important piece to the puzzle of vibrant health, we

now understand the risks we take if it comes at the cost of restful sleep. While it may be difficult to find time in our busy routines to exercise, planning ahead and being efficient with our workouts allows us to get the best of both worlds: invigorating activity and reparative rest.

Here are some tips to get more high quality sleep.

**Diet impacts quantity and quality of sleep.** As if you needed yet another reason to eat a health-promoting whole foods diet containing plenty of fruits and vegetables, research shows us that what we choose to eat can deeply impact how well we sleep. A study of 3,129 Japanese female workers concluded that low intake of vegetables

and fish, along with high intake of confectionary, noodles, and beverages with caffeine or added sugar all independently resulted in lower quality of sleep. In addition, skipping breakfast and irregular eating habits lead to reduced sleep quality.

The jury is still out on the ideal proportion of protein, carbohydrate, and fat for long-term improvements in sleep duration. Until that jury comes in, an individualized dietary plan meant to improve other parameters of health should align with optimal sleep patterns. These diets are typically low in added sugar, refined/highly processed foods, fried foods, and trans fats. They are high in fruits, vegetables, complex carbohydrates, lean sources of protein, and healthy fats such as those found in extra virgin olive oil (monounsaturated fats) and cold water fish (polyunsaturated fats). They are also high in fiber and essential vitamins, minerals, and amino acids.

A few foods which have been traditionally promoted as sleep-inducing have been studied in limited capacity. Elderly patients with insomnia who consumed fresh tart cherry juice twice daily showed improved sleep quality and increased sleep duration by 17 minutes.

In another study, consuming two kiwi fruits an hour before bedtime improved sleep time and sleep quality over four weeks. Adequate dietary consumption of magnesium, B vitamins (especially B3 and B12), and the amino acid tryptophan may also be useful, but further research is needed.



There's nothing on Facebook or Twitter that's so important you should be checking it in the middle of the night. Keep your sleeping area darkened and free of tech.

# IN THE GYM: PRO TIPS

Here are some additional tips to get higher quality sleep.

## 1) Make a Schedule

Maintain a regular sleep-wake cycle. Try to go to bed at the same time each night, as we truly are able to train our bodies to expect regularity. The time you choose is important as well: sleep prior to midnight is more restful.

## 2) Power Down

Turn off devices with blue light, such as the light emitted from TVs, phones, and tablets. This light has been shown to inhibit the production of the all-important sleep hormone melatonin. Similarly, try to avoid highly stimulating activity of all kinds, including exercise and stressful conversation, right before bed.

## 3) Black Out

Try to keep your sleep environment as dark as possible, as any light from the outside interferes with our circadian rhythms. Whenever this is not possible, sleeping masks may be recommended.

## 4) Ditch The Coffee

Those who metabolize coffee more slowly can be impacted for up to 24 hours by just one cup. While coffee may have some benefit and is not an issue for everyone, consider reducing your intake if you have sleep issues. On that note, if you wake to urinate often during the night, try reducing your intake of fluid 3 hours before bedtime.

## 5) Have a Snack

Though eating before bed is not generally recommended, those who wake often in the middle of the night may benefit from a small snack high in protein (think a small handful of healthy nuts) to help stabilize their blood sugar throughout the night.

## 6) Sometimes, Sleep to Satiety

The alarm clock is a very recent addition to our morning routine. All animals besides humans sleep until they feel rested, and for good reason. Sleeping just a few minutes per day short of what our bodies need may be enough to cause harm. Since most of us have no choice but to stick to a routine, take every opportunity you can to listen to your body. At least on weekends, turn off that alarm and allow yourself to sleep in. Your body will thank you.



Workout quality can tell you when to back off. If you've been feeling great in the gym and then suddenly hit a wall, you're not giving yourself adequate recovery and sleep.

## 7) Unwind And Let Go

Choose something relaxing (a warm bath, light reading, calm conversation with a loved one) to add to your bedtime routine. Set your intention on releasing the stresses of the day and remember that with the next morning comes a new opportunity to work toward your goals. Accept what has transpired today, and make an effort to be present in the moment at hand in order to create a more fulfilling tomorrow.

## 8) Keep Cool

Studies show that a slightly cooler room can be helpful in achieving restful sleep. Sixty-eight degrees is often a helpful starting point.

## 9) Create an Oasis

Your bed should only be used for sleep and sex. Allow this to become a space for revitalization only, so try to avoid doing work or watching TV in bed for extended periods of time.

## 10) Exercise

But as you've learned above, only at a time that's right for you—and not at the expense of sleep.



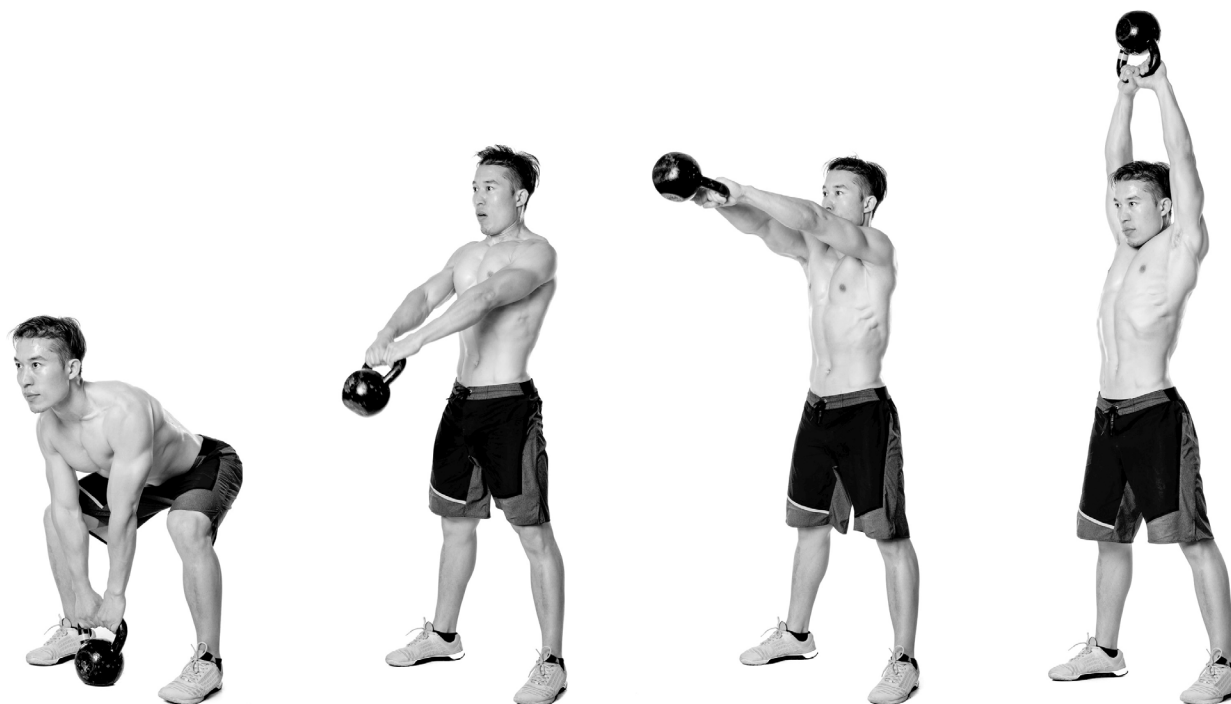
# THE POWER OF THE BELL

A single kettlebell is all the equipment you need to build strength and torch fat. Here's your game plan.

Two words: Asymmetrical load. Unlike a perfectly balanced dumbbell or barbell, a kettlebell is built like a cannonball with a handle on top. This imbalanced load challenges stabilizing muscle fibers throughout your body—muscle fibers that might not be stimulated during traditional weight lifting. And while you can curl, press, and squat with kettlebells—just as you would with conventional weights—kettlebells lend themselves to a host of other, unique exercises. In the following pages, you'll learn the kettlebell swing and other unique moves—and learn how kettlebells can beneficially augment traditional moves. This month's kettlebell workout integrates these moves into high-intensity circuits for a workout that's as much of a conditioning challenge as is a muscular one.



# IN THE GYM: WORKOUT OF THE MONTH



A kettlebell swing can quickly fire up your heart rate and engages every muscle in your body.

## THE KETTLEBELL WORKOUT

**DIRECTIONS:** Do the following workout 3-4 times per week. Do Part I as a continuous circuit three times through; don't rest between exercises and rest only 1-2 minutes at the end of each round. After three rounds of Part I, complete three rounds of Part II; don't rest between exercises and rest only 1 minute between rounds.

### PART I

EXERCISE	REPS
KB Swing	25
KB Curl	10 (each arm)
KB Goblet Squat	15
KB Overhead Press	10 (each arm)
KB Row	10

### PART II

EXERCISE	REPS
KB Pushup	20
KB Russian Twist	20 (each side)
Plank	60-90 seconds

### EXERCISE DESCRIPTIONS

**KB SWING:** (Pictured above) Hold a kettlebell with two hands and stand with your feet wider than shoulder width. "Hike" the kettlebell back between your legs, bending at the hips and slightly at the knees. Explosively reverse direction, keeping your back flat. Swing the bell up to eye level (or overhead). Swing it downward and immediately begin your next rep.

**KB CURL:** (Shown on previous page) Hold a kettlebell in one hand, letting it hang down to your waist. Flex your biceps to curl the weight up to your shoulder. Squeeze your biceps hard at the top of the movement. Slowly lower the weight. Repeat for equal reps on each side. (If you have two kettlebells, both arms can be done simultaneously.)

**KB GOBLET SQUAT:** Hold a single kettlebell at your chest with your elbows flared out to your sides. Flex your hips backward and squat low. Try to get your thighs parallel to the floor and avoid rounding your back. Push through the heels of your feet to return to the starting position. For the advanced, try pressing the weight overhead at the top of the move.



# IN THE GYM: WORKOUT OF THE MONTH



Try pushups with your hands on the largest part of kettlebells as pictured. This will be a greater challenge to stabilizing muscle fibers in your arms. As you gain confidence, try to do pushups holding the handles of the kettlebells.

**KB OVERHEAD PRESS:** Stand up straight and hold a kettlebell in one hand. Press the weight straight overhead, engaging your core muscles (abs) as you do so. Slowly return the weight to your shoulder. Repeat for an equal number of reps on each side.

**KB ROW:** Hold a kettlebell in one hand and rest your free hand on a bench. Lean forward so that your back is flat and parallel to the floor. Retract your shoulder blade to row the weight up to your chest. Slowly lower the weight under control. Repeat for an equal number of reps on each side.

**KB PUSHUP:** Get into a pushup

position with your hands on the fat, bell portion of two equal-sized kettlebells. Perform pushups, keeping your body in a straight line from heel to shoulder. For an advanced version of the move, do the pushups holding onto the handles of the kettlebells. To advance it even further, try doing a row at the top of the move—pulling one of the weights up to your chest, switching sides, and then doing another pushup.

**KB RUSSIAN TWIST:** Sit on the floor holding a single kettlebell with both hands at your chest. Bend your knees and raise your feet a few inches off the floor. Without rounding your back, rotate from side to

side, bringing the weight from hip to hip. Keep your core muscles (abs) flexed throughout. Repeat for an equal number of reps on each side.

**PLANK:** Face the floor and prop your body up on only your toes and your elbows/forearms. Keeping your body in a straight alignment from shoulders to ankles, hold this position for 60 to 90 seconds, keeping your abs braced the entire time.

*To see the kettlebell swing in action, watch this [YouTube](#) video from renowned kettlebell expert Steve Cotter. Subscribe to his channel for other kettlebell pointers.*

IN THE GYM: GEAR

# SUMMER READY

Get these hot weather picks—and forge an iron grip.



## ◀ CROSSFIT NANO 5.0 LTD

Reebok's CrossFit Nano kicks are built to handle tough cross training, but cool enough to wear anywhere. Their latest incarnation, the Nano 5.0 LTD, come in a patriotic, star-spangled colorway, with the words "Home of the Brave" on the outsole. Made with Kevlar, these also sport specially-grooved rubber tracks on the insole for rope climbing and a 3 mm heel-to-toe drop keeps you stable on heavy lifts. Available for men and women.

\$129.99, [Reebok](#)



## AIR MESH PERFORMANCE ▶

There are a lot of quick-drying, moisture-wicking performance apparel options, but for distance runners, Tommy John's Air Mesh Performance top is the new standard-bearer. That's because it's made of low-friction fabric that puts an end to "nipple burn"—or skin chaffing of any kind—which can happen as a shirt stretches and bounces during long runs. The Air Mesh is also anti-microbial and anti-odor.

\$85, [TommyJohn](#)



## ▲ FAT GRIPZ

You might not realize it, but you get arm training benefits every time you grip an object because clenching your fists engages the muscle of your forearms. Fat Grips make any bar thicker and let you add intensity without piling weight onto a bar or grabbing bigger dumbbells.

\$38.95, [Amazon](#)



## IN THE KITCHEN: RECIPE



# BRINED PORK CHOPS with APPLE HASH

How to add huge flavor without adding a ton of fat.

*Serves 6*

### MAKE IT

#### YOU'LL NEED

8 cups water  
Juice of 1 lemon  
Juice of 1 lime  
Juice of 1 orange  
¼ cup fresh fennel sprigs  
2 tbsp kosher or sea salt  
6 eight- to ten-ounce bone-in pork chops  
4 tbsp grapeseed oil  
2 cups Yukon potatoes, thinly sliced  
1 cup red onion, thinly sliced  
1 tsp white pepper  
2 cups Granny Smith apple, thinly sliced  
1 tsp sriracha

1) Mix 8 cups water, the fruit juices, fennel, and 2 tbsp kosher or sea salt in a large saucepan over medium heat. Simmer for 10 minutes. After heating, remove and allow to cool. Add the chops to the brine and refrigerate for 3 to 24 hours.  
2) In a large sauté pan over high heat, add 2 tbsp oil, then add 3 chops to the pan. Reduce heat and cook 6-7 minutes per side, which should yield a golden-brown pork chop. Repeat the process for the remaining 3 chops. Hold warm until serving.  
3) Return pan to medium-high heat, add 2 tbsp oil, allow it to

warm, then add potatoes. Stir until potatoes brown on the edges. Add onions, salt, white pepper, and cook until onions soften. Reduce heat to medium, add apples, and cook for 4 minutes. Add hash to the plate, top with pork chops and sriracha.

#### THE MACROS

CALORIES: 511  
PROTEIN: 48 g  
FAT: 27 g  
CARBS: 17 g

## IN THE KITCHEN: RECIPE



# MEATBALL TRIO

Blending beef, pork, and veal to create one killer recipe.

**Serves 6**

### YOU'LL NEED

2 eggs  
1 tbsp minced fresh parsley  
1 tsp minced garlic  
1 tsp minced fresh oregano  
8 oz ground beef  
8 oz ground pork  
8 oz ground veal  
1 tbsp panko breadcrumbs  
1 ½ cups half-and-half  
1 tsp chicken stock  
¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese  
1 tsp chopped fresh parsley  
¼ cup grapeseed oil

### MAKE IT

1) Whisk the eggs, parsley, garlic, and oregano in a small mixing bowl.  
2) In a separate mixing bowl, blend the beef, pork, and veal lightly by hand—do not overwork. Add the herbed eggs to the meat. Add panko breadcrumbs and mix by hand to bind. Refrigerate for 20-30 minutes.  
3) Combine chicken base and half-and-half in a saucepan over medium heat and simmer for 10-15 minutes until slightly thickened. Add cheese and parsley. Reduce

heat and cook for 10 more minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat and hold warm.

4) Portion meatball mixture into one-inch balls. In a sauté pan, heat the grapeseed oil, then brown the meatballs until golden brown, about 7 to 10 minutes each. Serve with cream sauce for dipping or coat meatballs and then serve.

### THE MACROS

CALORIES: 395  
PROTEIN: 32 g  
FAT: 26 g  
CARBS: 8 g



## IN THE KITCHEN: GEAR

# THE GOOD LIFE

Perfect burgers, homemade butter, and something just for Dad.



### ◀ ADJUSTABLE BURGER PRESS

This non-stick cast-aluminum-and-rosewood burger press lets you make perfectly proportioned  $\frac{1}{4}$ -pound,  $\frac{1}{3}$ -pound, and  $\frac{1}{2}$ -pound burgers. Add the ground beef, lock in the desired size, and press down for a patty that's guaranteed not to bunch up into a meatball when it hits the grill.

\$21.95, [SurLaTable](#)



### ▲ BAT BOTTLE OPENER

Dad's already got a bottle opener, of course. But does he have one fashioned from a bat used in a Major League Baseball game? These authenticated bottle openers are each affixed with a hologram, which indicates exactly which game the wood was used in. Choose from any team in the Majors. Baseball's not Dad's thing? Uncommon Goods also sells openers made from NHL-used hockey [pucks](#).

\$115, [UncommonGoods](#)

### COUNTERTOP BUTTER CHURN ▶

Pour 10 ounces of heavy whipping cream into the mason jar, hit the crank, and 10 minutes later you've got half a cup of homemade butter. The finished product is rich, soft, and easily spreadable. Taking the process into your own hands also lets you get creative with infusions; add maple sugar to the jar to make a delicious spread for scones and muffins, or add chives and other herbs for savory concoctions.

\$49.95, [TheVermontCountryStore](#)





# A MAN OF HONOR



Sgt. Sammy Lee Davis, third from the left, stands in the Oval Office on November 19, 1968, waiting to meet President Lyndon B. Johnson to receive the Medal of Honor.

Most people call him the real Forrest Gump. Sammy Davis Jr. called him the real Sammy Davis. Whatever else you want to call him, Sgt. Sammy Lee Davis is, first and foremost, a true American hero.

By Matt Tuthill

The crowning moment of Sammy Lee Davis' life will live forever, though maybe not in the way he had imagined. The video of Davis receiving the Congressional Medal of Honor from President Lyndon B. Johnson in the Oval Office in 1968 was immortalized not in newsreels, but in the 1994 Academy Award winner for Best Picture, *Forrest Gump*. Filmmakers superimposed Tom Hanks' head onto Davis' body for what became an iconic scene. Ever the team player, Davis says he

didn't mind at all when producers asked to erase his face. He was just happy to help.

Of course he was. Glory, fame, and credit were not Davis' ambitions when he joined the Army to fight in an unpopular war. Military service was simply his family's trade; his grandfather served in the Spanish-American War, his father in WWII, and his brothers in Korea and Vietnam. Davis didn't wait for a draft card to show up at his house. He enlisted in 1965 and was sent to

Vietnam in March of 1967. Early in the morning on November 18 of that year, Davis' 4th Artillery Regiment came under fire from three enemy units and Davis' Howitzer was struck by an enemy mortar. He survived the initial blast only to be wounded by friendly fire; the Howitzer positioned behind Davis began firing beehive anti-personnel rounds, each of which release 1,800 small arrows.

"We had to use that to fend off the enemy because there were so many

# SAMMY LEE DAVIS

of them and so few us,” Davis says. “Unfortunately, the gun behind me, they thought we were all dead because they had seen the rocket round hit.”

It was a little after 2 am. Davis was pinned between enemy and friendly fire and suffering from a slew of injuries. Thirty beehive darts were buried in his skin, his right thigh had been shot with an AK-47, his back and sternum were broken, and the ribs on his right

side were crushed. At this point, crawling to cover would have been the only sensible thing to do. Only then, Davis looked across the river and saw an American infantryman waving at him from a foxhole; he was pinned down with two other soldiers. Davis made a decision to try to help.

“In combat you learn to do for your brother what you hope they do for you,” Davis says. “I did for those three men across the riv-

er what I knew in my heart they would do for me. How could I not do that?”

Davis grabbed an air mattress to make his way across the river. “I knew how to swim but at that point knew I shouldn’t try to do it by myself,” he says.

When asked how he could make it across the river without being shot, Davis says simply, “That’s a very good question. Because they definitely saw me and they were



Davis poses for a picture while on tour in Vietnam. Military service was Davis' family trade. His grandfather, father, and brothers all served. Photos courtesy of Sammy Lee Davis. The image on the previous page is courtesy of the White House Photograph Office.

# SAMMY LEE DAVIS

shooting at me. I remember the water spraying all around me and I just have to thank the man above that they didn't hit me."

When he reached the other side, Davis stashed the air mattress and scrambled up the river bank to the foxhole. There, he found Jim Deister, Billy Ray Crawford, and Gwendell Holloway.

"Jim Deister had been shot through the head and the chest with a Chinese pistol," Davis recalls. "We thought he was dead but I wasn't going to leave a brother. [It turned out Deister was alive; Davis' actions saved his life.] I pulled him up over my shoulders. I picked the other two up under my arms—they could help. We made our way back

across the battlefield."

Holloway still had three clips of M-16 ammunition but the four men were astronomically outnumbered. Waves of up to 200 enemy soldiers would charge at their position, meaning the only course of action was for all four of them to lay down and play dead.

"I would watch their eyes," Davis says. "And when I could see them drop their weapon to do their job as a soldier, I would do mine first, and it worked. We got back to the river bank and I ferried them across. They got help on the other side."

Davis, meanwhile, crawled back to the second Howitzer to help fire it. "I set the fuses and we kept firing beehive." Eventually, the Vietcong were forced to retreat from the attack.

Even 50 years after that fateful day, it's shocking to hear Davis talk about enemy soldiers "doing their job" as if he were recapping a sporting event. But to be sure, he holds no animosity toward the men he fought against.

"For the most part, we did our job and they did their job," Davis says. "Most of them were good soldiers and had honor. The first time I had a buddy laying out and needed help, I could see the enemy hiding in the brush line and I raised my weapon up over

my head and slowly stood up and I could see that he could see me do it. I laid my weapon down so he could see it and went to help my buddy. He didn't shoot me so I said, 'Okay, he's got honor.' They started doing that too. They would hold their weapons up if they needed to help someone. There is honor among soldiers... There can be honor among soldiers."

Receiving the Medal of Honor came with some perks. For instance, Davis had always taken a ribbing for his name being identical to the Sammy Davis Jr., the entertainer. "The guys said I had both eyes and can't dance," Davis laughs.

When Sammy Davis Jr. finally met the Medal of Honor recipient, he had a surprise for him. He leapt into Sgt. Davis' arms and said, "I always wanted to meet you! You have no idea the ribbing I took because of my name!"

"We turned out to be pretty good friends," Davis says. "From then on out, because we were out on the road travelling a lot [often to give speeches on behalf of the military] we'd be in the same town sometimes. If we were in Vegas at the same time as him, we'd go to the show and he would call me up on stage and introduce me as the real Sammy Davis."

Not everyone back home was as welcoming. The anti-war movement in the U.S. reached a fever pitch and soldiers often bore the brunt of protestor wrath. Being a Medal of Honor recipient only painted a bigger bullseye on Davis' back.



Davis on the day he received the Medal.



# SAMMY LEE DAVIS

"As far as the protestors were concerned, I was the one always pushed out front. And as the one pushed out front, I was the one hit by beer bottles, stones, and got all the name calling," Davis says. "I proudly took it for my brothers because better they do it to me than to them."

General William Westmoreland sent Davis to give a speech at an anti-war protest at Berkley College in the late 70s. Country Joe and the Fish were performing, and before they took a 10-minute break to let Davis speak, they performed their most popular song, "I Feel Like I'm Fixin' To Die" a Vietnam War protest song that contained the lyrics, "Come on fathers, and don't hesitate, to send your sons off before it's too late. And you can be the first ones on your block to have your boy come home in a box." Country Joe finished the song to riotous applause, then took a break. Davis thought it was odd that the band took all of its equipment off the stage for such a short intermission, but realized why as soon as he stepped behind the mic.

"I was hit with beer bottles, wine bottles, everything," Davis says. "I had a big cut over my eye I was gushing blood." And his full dress uniform was covered in garbage and dog crap. Nevertheless, he didn't deviate from his script, saluted the crowd when he was done and said, "God bless America."

When he exited the stage, he was greeted by a dozen women who wanted to tell him something else. "I figured they were going to give me more of what I had just got."

Instead, they said, "We want you to know that we are here to protest the war, and not the warrior."

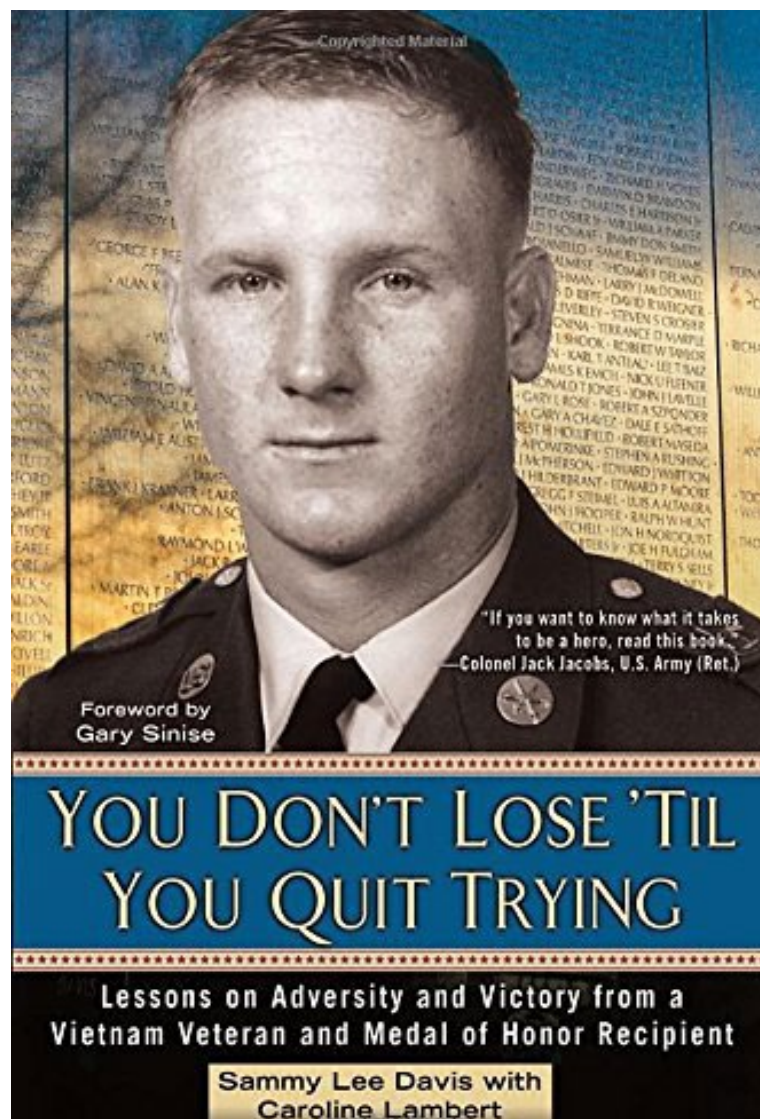
"I had never heard that, so that's what stuck in my heart each time I was exposed to such ridiculousness," Davis says. "I realized it's OK to protest a war, but it's never OK to protest the warrior."

The fact that American culture as a whole has taken to supporting soldiers, even if they disagree a particular war or war in general, gives Davis a lot of help for the future. "I encourage everyone to stand up for

what they believe is right in their hearts. I don't preach politics."

*Davis' book, [You Don't Lose Til You Quit Trying: Lessons on Adversity and Victory from a Vietnam Veteran and Medal of Honor Recipient](#) is available at [Amazon](#). His wife Dixie Davis penned her own book, which Davis describes as picking up where his book ends. It is called [Endless Love and Second Chances](#).*

Follow Davis on Twitter:  
[@sammyldavis1946](#)



Davis' book is available now. Click on the book cover to read more and buy it at Amazon.

# BETTER BURGERS

Robert reimagines the great American classic.



With apologies to Jimmy Buffet, a burger can be so much more than just “a big warm bun and a huge hunk of meat.” And yes, National Burger Month was May, but with delicious healthy recipes like these, there’s no reason not to eat burgers all year round. Fire up the grill and get ready to enjoy the American classic, only this time guilt-free.



## BETTER BURGERS

# GYRO BURGER

**SERVES 8**

### YOU'LL NEED

2 lbs lean ground lamb  
1½ lbs lean ground grass-fed beef  
1 tbsp garlic powder  
1 dash cayenne pepper  
1 tsp cumin powder  
1 tsp dried oregano  
½ cup crumbled feta cheese (or low-fat shredded mozzarella)  
Salt  
Pepper  
1 cup thin julienned red onion  
1 cup thin sliced cucumbers  
¼ cup low-fat ranch dressing

1 tbsp fresh dill, chopped  
½ head shredded iceberg lettuce  
Nonfat, nonstick cooking spray  
8 slices tomato  
8 small pocket pitas (3 inches)

### MAKE IT

1) Mix the ground lamb, beef, garlic powder, cayenne pepper, cumin, dried oregano, feta cheese, salt and pepper together. Form 8 patties (they should be about 7 ounces each). Set in the fridge while you prepare the rest of your ingredients.  
2) Make a marinated cucumber salad by combining red onion, cu-

cumber, low-fat ranch dressing and chopped dill together in a bowl.  
3) Preheat the grill and spray the patties on each side with cooking spray. Grill the burgers on each side to desired temperature. When they're almost ready, toast the pitas.  
4) Fill the bottom half of each pita pocket with lettuce, sliced tomato and top with gyro burger. Top the burgers with marinated cucumbers.

### THE MACROS

CALORIES: 498  
PROTEIN: 46 g  
FAT: 27 g  
CARBS: 24 g





## BETTER BURGERS

# TURKEY BURGER with SRIRACHA ONIONS



**SERVES 8**

### YOU'LL NEED

3½ lbs lean ground turkey  
1 tbsp garlic powder  
1 dash cayenne pepper  
1 tsp cumin powder  
1 tsp dried thyme  
½ cup crumbled blue cheese  
Salt  
Pepper  
1 tbsp sriracha  
1 medium onion, thinly julienned  
1 tbsp grapeseed oil  
½ head shredded iceberg lettuce  
8 slices tomato  
8 whole wheat burger rolls  
Nonfat, nonstick cooking spray

### MAKE IT

1) Mix the ground turkey, garlic powder, cayenne pepper, cumin powder, dried thyme, crumbled blue cheese, salt, and pepper together. Form into 8 patties of about 7 ounces each and place in the fridge while prepping the rest of your ingredients.  
2) Heat a sauté pan over medium heat and add the grapeseed oil. Allow the oil to get hot and add the onions. Sauté until slightly brown and then add the sriracha. Continue to sauté until well-coated (about 30 seconds) and set aside.  
3) Preheat the grill and spray the turkey patties with cooking spray on each side. Place the burgers on the grill and cook on each side until cooked all the way through. Toast the rolls if desired. Place shredded lettuce and tomato on the bottom

of each roll and then place the burgers on top. Top with sriracha onions and serve.

### THE MACROS

CALORIES: 464  
PROTEIN: 42 g  
FAT: 22 g  
CARBS: 25 g

### ROBERT SAYS:

“Sriracha has a nice kick, helps keep hunger at bay, and can even help your stomach digest food better. The blue cheese and special blend of spices makes this burger taste much richer than the nutrition profile would indicate. You won’t miss the fat.”

# BETTER BURGERS

## PUTTANESCA TUNA BURGER



This recipe is an excerpt from Robert's book, *Fit Fuel*. Get the book for more recipes, workouts, and motivation: [FitFuelBook.com](http://FitFuelBook.com)

### SERVES 8

### YOU'LL NEED

3½ lbs fresh raw tuna  
3 tbsp capers, minced  
3 tbsp raisins, minced  
1 tsp garlic, minced  
3 tbsp black olives, minced  
3 tbsp red onion, minced  
1 tsp dried oregano  
½ tsp red pepper flakes  
⅓ cup parsley, chopped  
3 tbsp toasted pine nuts  
⅓ cup extra-virgin olive oil  
Salt  
Pepper  
Nonfat, nonstick cooking spray  
8 whole-grain hamburger rolls  
8 tbsp basil pesto  
8 slices red onion, grilled  
1 cup roasted red peppers  
8 thin avocado slices (optional)

### MAKE IT

- 1) Preheat grill to 350°.
- 2) Dice tuna, then put it in a food processor and give it a rough mince, about 15 seconds, so it can be molded. (It should not be puréed.)
- 3) Remove tuna from food processor and place in a chilled mixing bowl. Mix all other patty ingredients in by hand. Season with salt and pepper, then portion into eight 7-oz patties.
- 4) Spray each side of patties with cooking spray.
- 5) Place patties on grill and cook 4 minutes on each side; this will yield a medium (pink) center.
- 6) If desired, grill rolls for 1 minute. Spread 1 tbsp pesto inside each roll. Place patties on buns, and top with onion and red peppers.

### THE MACROS

CALORIES 585  
PROTEIN: 68 g  
FAT: 26 g  
CARBS: 22 g

### ROBERT SAYS:

If there's a burger you could theoretically eat every day, this is it. This burger doesn't just taste great. A clean protein source with just the right amount of healthy fats, it will support all your efforts in the gym.

# BETTER BURGERS



## CHICKEN CAPRESE BURGER

**SERVES 8**

### YOU'LL NEED

3½ lbs lean ground chicken  
1 tbsp garlic powder  
2 dashes onion powder  
1 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped  
1 tsp dried Italian seasoning  
Salt  
Pepper  
8 slice low-fat mozzarella cheese  
8 slices red onion  
¼ cup pesto sauce  
2 cups baby spinach  
1 cup sliced beefsteak tomato  
8 multigrain hamburger rolls  
Nonfat, nonstick cooking spray

### MAKE IT

1) Mix the ground chicken, garlic powder, onion powder, parsley, dried Italian seasoning together. Add salt and pepper. Form 8 patties (they should be about 7 ounces each) and place in the fridge while prepping your burger toppings.  
2) Preheat the grill and spray the patties with cooking spray on each side. Place the burgers on the grill and cook all the way through; test one or more of the burgers by cutting into the center to ensure none of the meat is pink. Top the cooked burgers with mozzarella cheese. Toast the rolls on the grill if desired.

3) Spread pesto on the bottom of each roll and place spinach, tomato, red onion on top of that. Top with patties and serve.

### THE MACROS

CALORIES 507  
PROTEIN: 46 g  
FAT: 27 g  
CARBS: 23 g



# SALMON BURGER

*Serves 4*

### YOU'LL NEED

1 ½ pounds fresh salmon filet  
1 tsp sriracha sauce  
1 tsp seafood seasoning  
2 eggs, whisked  
½ cup Asian-style breadcrumbs  
1 tbsp grapeseed oil  
1 lemon  
1 cup shredded romaine lettuce  
¼ cup remoulade sauce  
4 hamburger rolls  
4 slices beefsteak tomato

### MAKE IT

1) Finely dice salmon, then place in a mixing bowl. Add sriracha, seasoning, and eggs. Mix together, adding roughly a third of the breadcrumbs. Form into four patties.  
2) Preheat a griddle to 300 degrees, add oil, then dust the patties in remaining breadcrumbs. Cook patties evenly, 2-3 minutes per side. Drizzle with lemon.  
3) Blend shredded lettuce and remoulade sauce on the side. Assemble burgers with sauce, tomato and patties.

### THE MACROS

CALORIES: 546  
PROTEIN: 45 g  
FAT: 34 g  
CARBS: 35 g

### ROBERT SAYS:

“Whenever possible, try to buy wild salmon instead of farmed. The farmed variety has a less favorable Omega-3 fat profile than wild.”



INTERVIEW: MIKE O'HEARN

# TITAN WISDOM

The eternally-fit Mike O'Hearn shares his best advice for getting started and taking control of your body.

Photos by Per Bernal



*Mike O'Hearn is one of the most popular personalities in the fitness industry—a place where few have enjoyed the kind of longevity he has. O'Hearn is 47 years old and has been in the spotlight for over 30 years, covering hundreds of magazines and starring in both the original*

*and the reboot of the athletic competition game show American Gladiators, where he went by the name Titan.*

*A powerlifting, martial arts, and natural bodybuilding champion, O'Hearn is often dismissed by novice lifters as a guru to fitness fanatics, but his knowledge*

*base has just as much application to regular folks who are just starting out. Here, he talks about why he wants true beginners to hold back a bit in the gym, why you should delay your cheat meal, and what has motivated him to stay on top of his game for all these years.*

# INTERVIEW: MIKE O'HEARN

**RI Magazine:** A lot of people probably don't want to take advice from you. They look at you and they say, "Well, I'm not trying to look like him. I just need to lose some weight and get into some kind of shape." And so they'll discount what you have to say. Because they think you're intimidating or that their goals couldn't align with your philosophy.

**Mike O'Hearn:** First, let me just say what my philosophy is. My philosophy is you only have one life, so be passionate about it and wake up every day ready to attack life and get the most out of it. The last seminar that I did, it got completely away from nutrition advice, completely away from how to exercise and the whole time we were up there I was, at moments, crying, and the crowd was with me doing the same thing. I was talking about how I dropped to a low and got depressed when I lost my mom, and I was talking about how to come out of that, wake up every morning with such passion that you jump out of bed.

I realize I have traveled a different path. I started doing this when I was 9, 10 years old and I got passionate about it and it stayed with me. That passion made me a multimillionaire. So, I understand people looking at me going "I don't want any advice from you. Don't act like you know who I am."



**RI:** In your mind is that a mistake?

**MO:** Look, you need character actors, someone for everyone to relate to and I realize that. That's the way humans are. Are you going to go up to the guy with the tattooed face on the Harley and assume he's good

guy? Society would say that guy is mean and probably breaks the law. But—and I've seen this over and over—that guy might be the sweetest, most humble guy on the planet. He's probably less judgmental than some people coming out of church on Sunday.

To get back to the question, I



# INTERVIEW: MIKE O'HEARN

think anybody successful in anything can teach you something. Phil Heath (5-time Mr. Olympia) can teach you something even though he's a massive, monstrous man. But I agree some people look at him and decide they don't want advice from him because they don't have aspirations to be a bodybuilder. But even if you don't want to look exactly like him, he's been so successful at it. There's something there that everyone could definitely learn from him.

**RI: This goes along with newcomer intimidation. A lot of people who are very heavy starting out, they want a program that won't put them in the gym, at least to start with, because they're afraid of people in the gym judging them. They're self-conscious and afraid. Is it a mistake to try to train outside of a gym for a prolonged period of time, say, a month or more? Would it be better to just get it over with and get to the gym?**

**MO:** If someone said that to me, I'm 100% on their side. I actually think that less at the beginning is better. I try to do the least amount of work to continuously get better. Opposed to saying, "Let's get the nutrition 100%, vitamin intake to 100%, and in the gym training five days a week." I don't believe in doing that. It's a ladder, one step at a time. We don't need to jump to the third step. I think that's why I

have success with people. I want them to baby step to their goals.

When I work with people to start with, I don't want them worrying about supplementation right away, and I only ask for 70% in the gym. Anyone that wants to go faster than that, I say no. All I need from them is to do the nutrition correctly. Let's just get a handle on that and your

body's going to change.

And I do understand when people are uncomfortable. When I was powerlifting and doing shows like *Battledome*, I had to put on a lot of size and didn't like to take my shirt off at the time, so I can relate to that.

Dialing in the nutrition will create a lot of good changes and make people feel better. Before



# INTERVIEW: MIKE O'HEARN

long, they'll be ready to go the gym.

One of the things that has always scared me is you see someone come in after three months off and the first thing they do is hit the treadmill running. Relative to the person that comes in there, jumps on the treadmill, and just starts walking. Because the walking is more than he's been doing. Your body is so smart it's going to understand that what you're doing now is more. That's doing enough at that time. Relative to the guy that comes in and goes "I just ran six miles my first day back at training." You're traumatizing your body.

**RI: Do you have a go-to template for starters? Are there basic things you want everyone to do?**

MO: No. I know a lot of people have these programs you can get as soon as you sign up and they're making a bundle on it. But I do everybody individually—and that starts with finding out where each person is mentally. And no matter how excited they are, they don't need to go 100 miles an hour out of the gate.

**RI: Because that sets you up for burnout, doesn't it?**

MO: It sets you up for burnout and it also sets you up for having to be this person that's always on. The worst thing you

can do is get away from the balance of life and understanding that you're going to hit and miss. Sometimes all I need you to do is get the foundation work in. We will take months on one part

of and it, then if we have a huge goal we'll do a big push—and then we'll come back down and we'll breathe. We'll let the body recover and start again. You're putting your body through



# INTERVIEW: MIKE O'HEARN

trauma as you're of pushing that fat off and trying to maintain the muscle mass all at once. This is why sports have off seasons. It's funny how even powerlifters and bodybuilders forget about that at times. They keep pushing and keep pushing throughout the year and that's where I see them burn out. Their bodies give up.

**RI: The next problem we see with beginners is that the first 10-15 pounds can come off pretty quickly once they make some changes. Then, what they're not ready for is that first plateau. And because they're not ready for it, that sends them spiraling backward. They think it's not working anymore and so they quit.**

MO: Yeah, that's a huge one. Because you get the initial water droppage and you cleaned up your diet and your body just kind of just drops that weight. They think that the body weight that dropped is pure fat. And then it slows down, the body starts to regulate... Some of the big things that I try to do, is I try to talk to them and explain all of this. Yes, there are going to be times where your body drops and then it doesn't and it slows.

For those people that haven't trained before and maybe read this article and want to start now, they need to understand that keeping that ultimate goal clear in the front of their mind is what will get them through.

**RI: With regard to taking your foot off the gas or having de-load periods, do you program those in for everyone? Or is that individual as well?**

MO: That, I think, is 100% individual.

**RI: Because a programmed deload period might be too far away? Or even too soon, correct?**

MO: I mean, if it's an elite athlete, it's easier to know that if you have a meet in three months that you'll need two weeks after that meet to deload and relax. That's easy. But for your individual that's working 9-6, that's got the family and got the kids and is running around and has to do homework with them and all that, I don't think you can plan a deload. I think it's going to be individualized. Late nights working, vacations, all those things will interfere with training time, so I would just encourage the slow rise up the mountain, rather than programming a lot of time off.

**RI: Diet is so important to your philosophy. Do you have a short list of foods that you want everyone to eat?**

MO: I work with everyone from regular guys and girls, vegetarians to vegans. I work with whatever their religious reasons or personal preferences are. For me, I'm the kind of guy that will eat anything and everything and

I don't run away from the typical gluten or breads or all that kind of stuff. I really don't sweat it.

Avoiding any food invites a blowup when you reintroduce that food. Anyone that stays away from bread and carbs and then goes back to it can gain 15-20 pounds within a week. Because their body's just not used to it. You've taught your body to function differently. You've taught your body to use protein as energy instead of carbs. So, it's one of those things that I believe in trying to keep all those foods in there. I would hate to tell somebody, "Hey guess what, you can't have pasta ever again when you're working with me as a client." I can't do that. Because I know I love pasta. Get rid of pasta and of course you'll lose weight. I just believe in trying to keep a good balance, both mentally and physically.

**RI: For macronutrient guidelines, what do you like to tell people? Do you have a certain amount of protein, carbs, and fat that you want them to have, relative to their bodyweight?**

MO: I don't break it down per gram per pound. Everybody is different. I try to give them a realistic amount of protein to eat at regular intervals. Let's just take a couple girls I'm working with right now, twins, as an example. Both are working out five days a week and they're trying to become bikini models, for the



# INTERVIEW: MIKE O'HEARN

Mike and his girlfriend, Mona Muresan, are both well-known in the fitness industry and a ubiquitous presence on social media. Click the links to follow [Mike](#) and [Mona](#) on Twitter.



first time. They've never done anything like this in their lives. They were both a little heavy-set. So, I'm going to give them about 15-20 grams of protein every three hours. That's just to support recovery and keep muscle. Then I factor in carbohydrates, fats, and vegetables from there. Usually I'll go into and try to get their carbohydrates and fats up quite a bit at the beginning. So, their body is used to taking in calories and helps speed itself up. Do that instead of starving the person right from the start and breaking it down.

You know, I'm closing in on 50

years old now and my metabolism is doing better now than ever, just because I'm more on the nutrition daily and trying to keep that thing up there as high as I possibly can.

**RI: Do you believe in cheats and if so, what is an appropriate way to incorporate those?**

MO: Originally, a cheat day, or a refeed day, was always supposed to be a way to get an athlete through a plateau because the body was working so hard and getting in just enough food to support activity levels. You do the refeed day because

your body is just not taking in enough and the refeed gets the metabolism going again. But somehow it transferred from an elite athlete or someone getting ready for a bodybuilding show to everyone on every diet, no matter what kind of shape they're in, gets a cheat day. But it's not one of those things that you just get to do because you feel like or because it's Sunday.

So, what I want people to understand is a cheat is not a freebie. This is how I would like to approach a cheat day: If you have something to get ready for—could be a bodybuilding show, could be a class reunion—then use the cheat meal as a goal. Don't just say, "It's Sunday so I get a cheat meal." Say, "Hey, you know what, if I drop six pounds in the next two weeks, then I'm going to celebrate with a cheat meal." But if you've just started a diet and it's your first week, that's not long enough to know if your diet is even working yet. So it's not time to do a cheat. It's easy to go overboard with a cheat, especially early on in a diet, so I just want people to be cautious. The idea has been diluted from what it actually was meant for.

I know a lot of people want it because mentally it helps. But if you're taking in the right amount of calories from good food sources, you shouldn't feel crazed or famished or have wild cravings. If you feel any of those things early on in a diet, you

# INTERVIEW: MIKE O'HEARN

probably cut out too many calories, you're training too hard, or you're not getting enough sleep. So you just have to be smart about it. Think about all the reasons you might feel that way before getting a box of donuts. I love my cheat days just like everyone else. But if I'm guest posing in three weeks, I'm not going to have a cheat day until after that's done. Once a week, I think for most people, is too often. You have to do a little more to earn it.

**RI: What's your opinion of alcohol? Does it have a place in a diet?**

MO: Alcohol is toxic to the body. Your body has to clean it out of your system because your body doesn't function correctly with it in there. So, I would stay away from it. If you want to use it to celebrate, of course I understand that, but you should also understand what it does to you—how it acts as a sugar, how it disrupts hormone production, how it disrupts sleep. As much as you can stay away from it, the better you're going to function and the better you'll feel. I put in the same category as a cheat. Don't schedule it as a guaranteed thing you'll have every week. Set goals to get there.

Again, we're talking about moderation. A glass of wine here or there has little adverse affect. It's actually healthy. But it certainly shouldn't be every day.

**RI: Do you believe there are supplements everyone should take?**

MO: I'm very big on branch chain amino acids for recovery. A multivitamin as well. Whether you're training or not training, I believe in the multivitamin. Vitamins C, E, and D are big just for daily life. Never mind training.

**RI: You've spoken a lot about meditation. In broad strokes, can you go over your approach to that?**

MO: For me it's about talking to myself and centering myself on what I want in life and the goals I want to achieve. Also, battling myself and pushing myself. I use it for my time, my alone time. Just to kind of look at life and value what you have. To be grateful. We all get carried away in this crazy life.

Something I love to do is take Sundays to go to the beach and just sit there and be by the ocean and just think about everything that's happened that week. The good things, the bad things, how I can get better as a person. I would like to learn more about myself and about life. Meditation can be used for that. For me it's truly refreshing. You feel energetic and more focused afterward.

**RI: Your girlfriend, Mona Muresan, is an accomplished fitness competitor. Does having someone in your life who's just**

**as into fitness as you are make it easier? Or more fun?**

MO: People have always told me that when you meet the right person, you'll know. I've dated and I always thought I had the right girl at the time. Until I met Mona. And it really changes life and it makes it easier and more focused. It's like having a baby, you can't explain it until it happens to you. You can't fully understand it.

I would say: Don't try to find somebody that is good for you at the moment. Try to find somebody who's better than you. That makes you raise who you are as a person. I think I am better now than I think I've ever been.

I'm not saying date the same kind of person that you are or that they need have to have the same profession, because it might not grow. But being with her has pushed me. I don't think I've ever pushed as hard as I've been pushed the last three years of my life. And it's all because of the motivation I get from her and our relationship.

**RI: You trained with Robert. You've also trained with some of the strongest men in the world. How does Chef stack up? Were you at all impressed, or is too hard to impress you?**

MO: What I loved about working out with Robert was that, first of all, he was stronger than a lot of the bodybuilders I've ever dealt with. He was much stron-

# INTERVIEW: MIKE O'HEARN



Mike rarely goes out—even to the gym—without one of his four dogs: [Stryker](#), Khaleesi, Panda Bear, and Teddy Bear (pictured).

ger. He's intense. What I loved is his drive and his determination not to quit. Because most of the guys I train with all break. They'll break emotionally and physically and something about him was different and this is why you can see that this guy is successful. He wasn't just going through the motions. We were living in it together and working out together and he was passionate about it. He was like, "Let's get into this, let's get this fight going." And that's what I loved about working out with him.

And yes, I've trained with everyone. Martial artists, powerlifters, wrestlers, but Robert is one of those guys I'll remember forever. His mentality is the same as mine. He didn't start to take it easy when he turned 30. If anything, he hit it harder. People think they peak in high school

or college, but, man you can get so much better. And he's one of those guys that believes that, just like I do. He showed me that day when we trained.

**RI: A lot of people actually just know you for your dogs. You have four, including three huskies. What do they bring to your life?**

MO: They make me understand what life is all about. Somebody once said to me, "How the hell do you get up every day, for the last 30 years, to go train at 4 am?" And I'm like, "How the fuck do you get up every day and 7 or 8, go to work for somebody else till 6 at night, come home kiss your wife and the kids goodnight and go to bed and do it again the next day?" I really can't comprehend not living this life with passion and

doing something what you truly love. The dogs, besides the love they give, and the stimulation and calmness that they give, they have an excitement for every single day. You walk out of the house to get the mail and come back and they're so excited they can't believe it. Every day is special to them because it's a new day. How wise are they? Much wiser than many of us.

*Learn more about Mike and his online training programs at: [MikeOHearn.com](http://MikeOHearn.com).*

*Click this thumbnail to watch Mike and Robert train together.*





ASK US ANYTHING

# YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

This month, our experts tackle plateaus, dealing with negativity on social media, and getting your abs back after having a baby.

## The Dreaded Plateau

**Q:** I've been reading Robert's book, *Fit Fuel*, and doing the workouts and love it. I started out at just under 300 pounds and today, five months later, I'm 260. I was thrilled, but I haven't lost any weight at all in the last two weeks. I guess you'd call this a plateau. Is it normal? Do I just keep doing what I'm doing and I'll eventually get past it or do I need whole new approach?

— D. Elliston, via the web

**A:** Fully embrace the plateau, continue to visualize a positive outcome, and then be prepared to work even harder, says [Jay Cardiello](#), a personal trainer featured on ABC's *My Diet Is Better Than Yours* ([jcardio.com](#)). "Plateaus are great ways to experience the journey that



You should be prepared to up the intensity of your training after you reach a plateau, but don't throw everything you've done out the window.

you have been on," Cardiello says. "Look back on all that you have accomplished, the good times and the tough times and realize how strong you are for having come to a plateau. Most healthy eating programs, diets or fitness plans fail because people have not made changed their mindset, behavior, or raised their standards—which is a

huge factor in creating a sustainable outcome. Just look at the new year holiday. People start on January 1st and statically most of them quit by the 16th. Why? Because they haven't changed their mindset. Right now ask yourself what you have accomplished and what positive physical and mental gains have you received from this journey (up until

# ASK US ANYTHING

this point). I would bet it's a lot!

"A quick story: Roger Bannister was the first man to break the four-minute mile barrier. Up until that point in running history, no one had ever accomplished this feat. People said it could never be done and that athletic times would plateau, and never get faster. Bannister didn't train harder, diet more, or see his work up to that point as a failure. He focused on changing his mindset in order to break that plateau. He visualized running the four-minute mile and raising his hands in victory. Eventually, his vision became reality because of the changes he made first in his mind.

"What I'm getting at is this: enjoy the plateau. Look at it as a chance for you to focus on increasing your confidence, mental game, giving your body a chance to rest, and celebrate you. Change your mindset by communicating better to yourself and stop focusing all of your energy on 'frustration'. Because what you say is what you'll become. Then, we go out and find people that will support our frustration and then we quit. You're not a quitter if you hit a plateau. You're a person who achieved a new standard that now you just need to raise your game. Congrats on all that you're accomplishing."

## Dealing With An Emotional Panhandler

**Q:** I love my friend dearly, but being friends with her on Facebook is unbearable. Her biggest issue is she's about 100 pounds overweight, and she spends a lot of time looking for sympathy. Every post is negative, with a lot of cryptic ones, like "Oh, what a horrible day..." I could block her, but I'd rather try to help her. What can I do?

— M. Simone, via Facebook.

**A:** Emotional panhandling is unhealthy for everyone involved—



This scene look familiar? There are real people in your life who could use your attention. Obsessing over social media is its own problem; we could all probably do with a little less. When you do choose to use it, it's important to try to keep the majority of your interactions positive.



# ASK US ANYTHING

from the person doing the begging to the person who reads to the posts, according to [Leah Jantzen](#), a life coach based on Long Island, NY ([leahjantzen.com](#)). “I think you are doing the right thing by trying to help your friend,” says Life Coach Leah. “She is clearly using these cryptic posts as a cry for help and a way to get attention. My suggestion would be twofold. First, you want to teach her how to be more positive on Facebook, and how being positive can attract positive people who can lift you up and not contribute to your sadness. I would invite her to do something fun with you, like go out for a healthy lunch, or coffee, then take a selfie and post it on FB with positive words to accompany it. Watch the ‘likes’ roll in! Show her how presenting yourself in a positive light will gain you way more attention, but in a positive way. If this experiment goes well, take it one step further. Offer to do a healthy eating or exercise challenge with her and chronicle your journey together. Use this opportunity to encourage and support her, and show her by example how a person can change their behaviors and habits when they have the support of a friend. If you go through all of that and it still fails, it might be time to start hiding her posts.”

## Post-Natal Abs Training

**Q:** “I gave birth to my first child six months ago, and while I’ve lost most of the baby weight, my abs still feel “loose” and the lower portion of my stomach sags. Besides crunches and planks, what



Vanessa Tib isn't just a fitness model. She's a registered nurse and knows how to help men and women get into killer shape. Photo courtesy of OAMG Photography.

can I do to tighten up my stomach?”

— S. Turner, via the web

**A:** A few dietary tweaks, increased cardio, and a targeted abs routine can get you back in the game quickly, according to [Vanessa Tib](#), a fitness model and registered nurse.

“Congratulations on the exciting new chapter in your life, and don’t feel bad about any of the changes to your body,” Tib says. “Pregnancy causes a lot of changes to a woman’s body. As your stomach expands to

make room for your growing baby, your abdominal muscles become looser, your skin stretches, and the pelvic girdle also expands. All of these normal pregnancy processes must occur in order for the body to provide a healthy environment for the baby.

“Often, after giving birth, a woman is left with some extra weight, loose abdominal skin, and a relaxed pelvic girdle, which, combined, are responsible for causing that hanging post-pregnancy belly.

“Fortunately, the human body is great at repairing itself and adjusting back to its previous state. You



# ASK US ANYTHING

can definitely reduce that hanging belly appearance, and tone your abs once again, but it is going to take time and a lot of hard work.

“First off, it’s important to make some dietary changes: reduce simple carbohydrates, refined sugars, white pasta, white bread, and saturated fats, which can hinder your progress.

“It is also important to eat small frequent meals throughout the day to keep your metabolism fired up and burning calories. Those meals should contain plenty of fresh leafy green vegetables, fruits, lean meats, complex carbohydrates, and healthy fats. You should also be drinking plenty of water.

“As for training, I have always been a fan of training abs with weights. Abs are muscles—just like any other in the human body—and weights help to make them stronger and more defined.”

Tib recommends doing the following abs routine at least three times a week in conjunction with high-intensity cardio. Get more from Vanessa at [VanessaTib.com](http://VanessaTib.com)

## Vanessa Tib’s Abs Routine

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS
Machine Crunch	4	25
Decline Situp Hanging	4	25
Leg Raise Standing	3	15-20
Cable Twist	3	15 (each side)

## EXERCISE DESCRIPTIONS

**Machine Crunch:** Sit in a weighted crunch machine and use the pin to select a challenging weight. Keeping your neck in a neutral position, crunch forward slowly. Hold the position at the peak contraction and then slowly return to the start.

**Decline Situp (Weighted):** Hook your legs into a decline bench and lie back holding a weight plate across your chest. Start with a 10-pound weight, but try to work up to a 25-pound weight. Without rounding your back, sit up. Hold the position at the peak contraction, then slowly return to the start.

**Hanging Leg Raise:** Rest your

forearms in the cradles of a leg raise station, or if none is available (or for an extra challenge) hang onto a pullup bar with your hands. Raise your legs out straight in front of you until your body forms a 90-degree angle. Hold the position for a second, then slowly return to the start. Do consecutive reps without using any momentum.


**Standing Cable Oblique Twist:** Stand next to a cable station and hold the handle straight out in front of you. Without bending your elbows or rounding your back, rotate away from the weight stack. Squeeze your core muscles in that position, then slowly return to the start. Repeat for an equal number of reps on each side.



For the best post-pregnancy fitness experience, it’s ideal not to let activity levels dip too much during the pregnancy itself. Talk to your doctor about how much training would be right for you.



# WORDS TO LIVE BY



*“By perseverance,  
study, and eternal  
desire, any man can  
become great.”*

*– General George S. Patton, Jr.*