

ROBERT IRVINE

MAGAZINE

Jan/Feb 2017

Nothing is Impossible

MAKE 2017 YOUR YEAR

MEALS, WORKOUTS,
AND MOTIVATION
TO HELP YOU
TAKE CHARGE

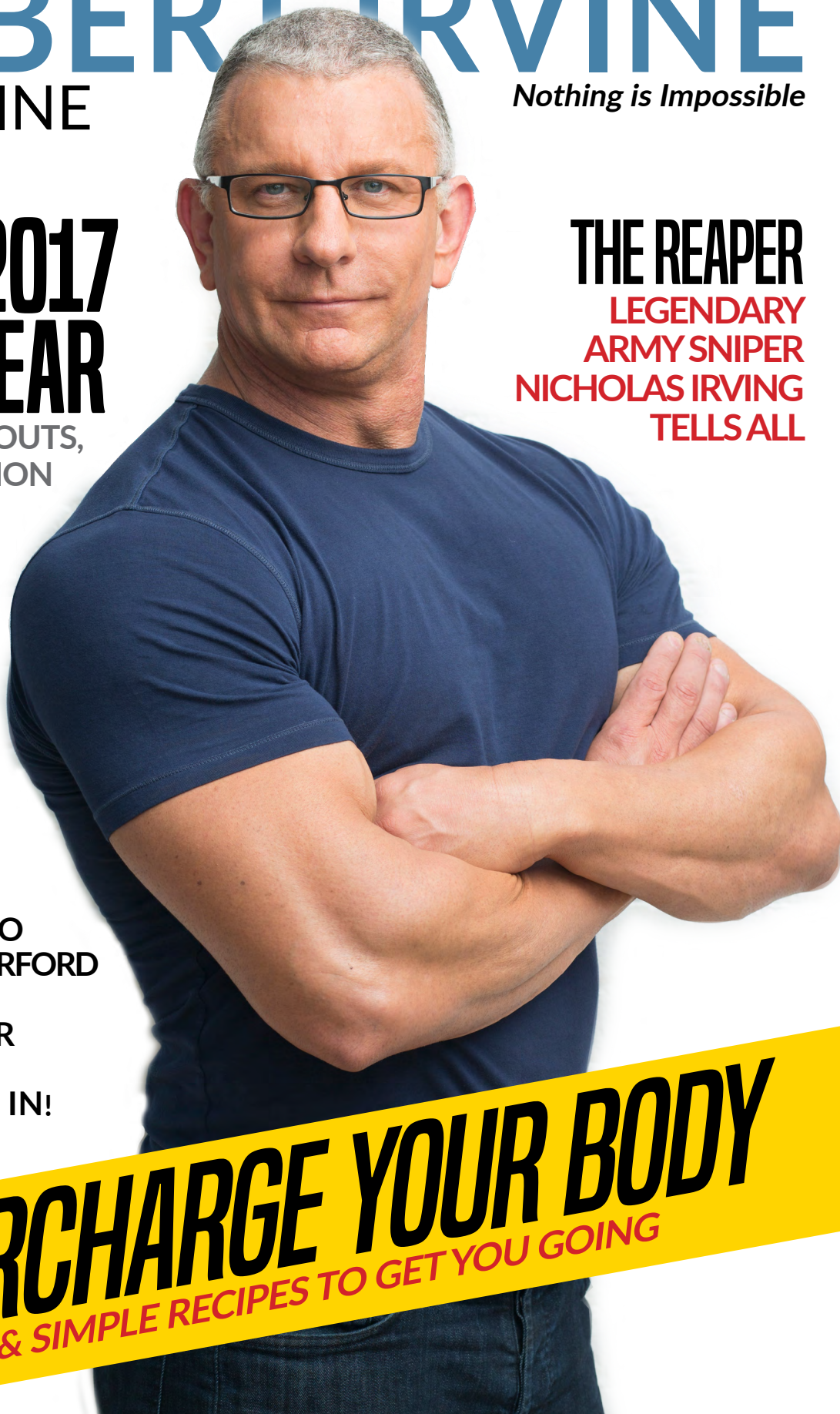
EXPERT FITNESS ADVICE

JAY CARDIELLO
STEVE WEATHERFORD
SEAN HYSON
STEVE COTTER
...AND MANY
MORE WEIGH IN!

THE REAPER

LEGENDARY
ARMY SNIPER
NICHOLAS IRVING
TELLS ALL

SUPERCHARGE YOUR BODY
NEW CLEAN & SIMPLE RECIPES TO GET YOU GOING



ROBERT IRVINE MAGAZINE

Nothing is Impossible

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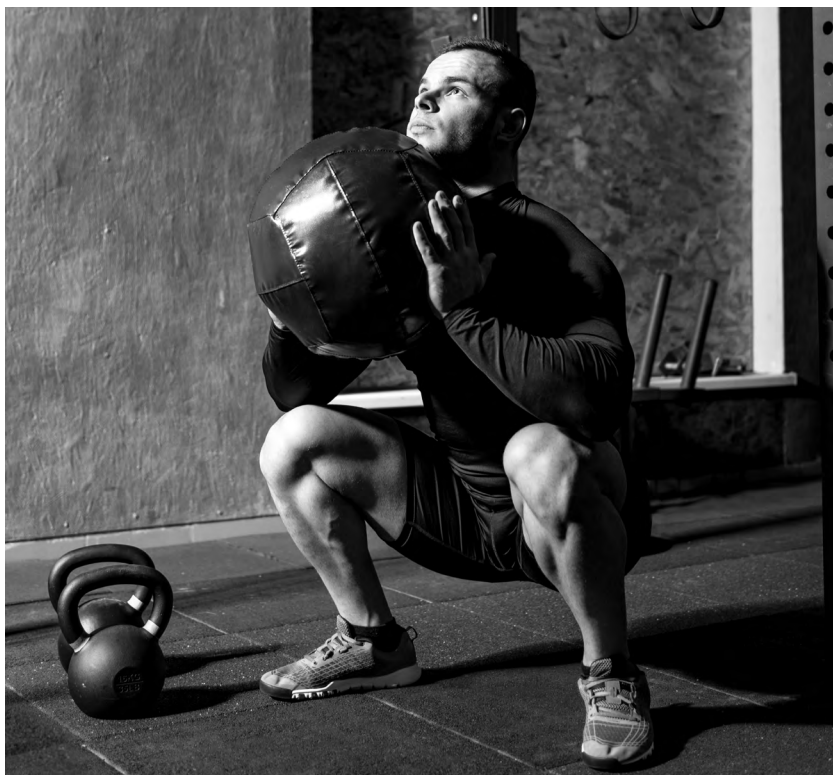
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JUST BEGIN AGAIN

Harness the power of now and let it power you to great things in 2017.

The statistics on failure of new year's resolutions are absolutely staggering. One study showed that just 8% of people realize their goals. Fitness goals in particular are abandoned with blinding speed, with a majority of January newcomers throwing in the towel before the month is even over.

Why does this happen? Because intention, in and of itself, can feel powerful in the moment. Everyone who makes a New Year's resolution sincerely wants to see it come true. When they say they will change they believe it. But no matter how pure an intention you have, that intention loses all of its power over time if you lack a clear plan of action to back it up. We have a lot of content in this double issue aimed at this very problem. Read my new fitness rules article on Pg. 12 to get started. Then check out our one-on-one interviews with Steve Weatherford (Pg. 21) and Jay Cardiello (29), then flip to our New Year's expert advice roundup on Pg. 53. I guarantee you that you'll find something that will resonate with you and what you're trying to accomplish this year and beyond.

But more than just a solid workout and nutrition plan, you need to have a plan to deal with adversity.



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ROBERT'S LETTER



Nothing is beyond your reach in 2017. Take your big goal and divide it into small, incremental, time-sensitive goals.

If your new plan has you going to the gym five days a week and all of a sudden you need to skip a day or two because of work or a family emergency, are you going to let that setback derail your entire program? Most people would, because both action and inaction are backed by powerful inertia.

I wrote about this concept of inertia in my book *Fit Fuel*: Action begets more action, laziness begets more laziness. Take the example of a super-fit go-getter who's killing it at work. He's able to stay on top because he rides that wave. If he's smarter than the average guy, it's only because he's smart enough not to let go of that inertia. Once you're

in the habit of success, it takes more than one misstep to fall out of the habit. Now take the guy who can't get off his couch and can't seem to get any area of his life in order. Inertia is at play in his experience as well. Unfortunately for the guy who's losing, the same holds true; inertia is hard to reverse.

The good news in this example: You can start to form healthy habits and build your own inertia in as little as three weeks. Some studies suggest it's longer than that, but in my personal experience, three weeks is a major hurdle. Power through that benchmark and you're on your way. If you can push to the end of March, you've built serious inertia,

the kind where it will feel worse to stop than it will to continue.

You can make a major change in your life starting right now. You can make 2017 your year. Just remember that the act of summoning the raw willpower to make the change is a bigger challenge in the beginning. Soon, healthy habits will be part of the new you. Just be prepared to say goodbye to the old you.

Yours in health,

CLEANING UP

Looking to re-energize your body, feel better, and heal faster?

You might try a different take on the cleanse.

By Gail Kim-Irvine

The last time I tried a juice cleanse I made it two days. By dinnertime on Day 2, Robert was cooking something that smelled good and I broke down and wound up eating a huge meal. Did that happen because of a lack of willpower? Did it happen because Robert is that good of a chef? (Yes, but that's beside the point right now.) Or did it happen because juice cleanses are too extreme and leave your body wanting for nutrients so badly that cravings can get totally out of control? I—and many health-care professionals—would argue that the answer to this last question is yes.

Especially if you're active and lifting weights, I can't recommend a juice cleanse. A week of eating vegan on the other hand, can have effects that are just like a cleanse. After doing some research, I began with periodic vegan "cleanses" last year, for one week per month, and the effects were immediate. I had better sleep, better energy when I woke up, got over injuries faster, and in the interest of divulging everything in the "pro" column, I even got regular.

In my profession, I'm all about keeping my muscle, so protein is key. This, combined with my

own personal preference, is why I'm a carnivore at heart and will probably never go vegan full-time. Nevertheless, I've learned that giving your body a break from eating meat every single day is a hugely positive thing.

As for protein, there are plenty of ways to get complete proteins while still eating vegan. When I go vegan, I eat a ton of quinoa, as well as white, black, and kidney beans. I learned to

make a delicious white bean soup (see the next page) and Robert taught me that dense veggies like carrots, turnips, and parsnips hold up much better in a soup. Porous veggies will get soggy and lose their flavor.

Almonds and almond butter are also key; so is spinach, oatmeal, hummus, tofu, and seaweed. You'd be surprised how many of the better burger joints now offer black bean burgers



Follow Gail on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

GAIL'S CORNER



White beans are high in fiber, protein, antioxidants, and have even been shown to improve cognitive ability.

that are so satisfying you won't miss the beef (at least not too much). In a pinch, Boca Burgers from the frozen food aisle in the grocery store aren't too bad.

While eating vegan, I also learned to enjoy and appreciate my food more. Your whole mindset changes. A fresh, crisp apple tastes like candy and actually feels incredible. Your body just soaks up the nutrients and it gives you real energy. Try going vegan for just two days this month. If you plan it right and surround yourself with fresh, healthy foods, I bet you'll go the whole week. Your body, and mind, will thank you for it.

Now try this... VEGAN ROAST CAULIFLOWER AND WHITE BEAN SOUP

YOU'LL NEED

3 tbsp grapeseed oil
1 tbsp garlic, chopped
2 cups of sliced leeks
1 large head cauliflower (or 2 bags of cauliflower florets)
1 can of white beans
1 can of Cannellini beans
2 cartons (64 oz) of organic lower sodium vegetable broth
Salt and pepper

MAKE IT

1) In a large pot on medium heat add the grapeseed oil and sauté the garlic and leeks until they soften.

2) Add the chopped cauliflower and sauté for two more minutes.

3) Add the vegetable broth and bring to a boil until the cauliflower is cooked all the way through. Reduce heat to a simmer and add both cans of beans. Simmer for 15 min and remove from heat.

4) In batches, add the soup to the blender and purée until smooth. Add salt and pepper to taste.

SLOW & STEADY

Take it from a doctor who has seen the downside of people trying to do too much, too fast. Sustainable goals and a steady pace are the only way to approach your resolutions.

BY DR. MICHAEL SCHUTZ

The New Year means a lot of New Year's Resolutions, particularly from folks who who overindulged over the holidays. And while it's pretty easy to put on 10 pounds when you're surrounded by rich, decadent food, we all know it doesn't come off quite as fast.

Weight control is nothing more than calories ingested minus calories burned. Think of it like a bank account but you want a healthy balance. You want to try to take in 500-600 calories less per day than you burn. This will give you a weight loss of 1-1.5 pounds per week. Extended fasts and frantic gym sessions—especially if you've had a long layoff—will only backfire. When you starve yourself, you lose muscle mass first. This is the easiest energy source for your body to utilize. You will also reduce your metabolism and make weight loss that much harder.

I use a calorie counter app on my smart phone. There are many free ones and they can include calorie counts for prepared foods and also track calories burned from exercise.

Some commercial diet products use points to keep track of intake and can work. The most important thing is finding a system that you prefer to use long-term. Lifestyle changes don't happen fast and are only sustainable if you can work comfortably within that system.



Exercise is the other part of this equation. Besides the obvious benefits of weight loss, exercise can reduce the risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes and cancer. If you have been overly sedentary, just five minutes of activity, such as walking, is a start; you can build it up from there from there. Contact your physician if you have questions about an appropriate level of activity. Consider using a trainer to get started and help you design a program that works for you. Some people may have different limitations such as back or joint problems and need a more specialized workout program to take that into account. Try to find a trainer with a good knowledge of anatomy and physiology who can design a program around any limitationsthat

you might have.

If you decide to go it alone, be sure to warm up slowly to avoid injury. As for choosing a program, you could give the Workout of the Month a try on Pg. 14. It will challenge every muscle, give you a good cardio workout, and allow you to achieve your goals over time.

We all start in different places and have different needs. Don't worry about what anyone else in the gym is doing. Remember: They're all there for self-improvement just like you are. Every day you're going to push yourself another step further, and in a year, all of those steps are going to add up to big-time changes you're going to be proud of.

[Dr. Michael Schutz](#) is a urologist practicing at the Jersey Urology Group in Somers Point, NJ.

KERRON CLEMENT



The two-time U.S. Olympic gold medalist has some poignant words of wisdom on how to approach fitness and life.

Kerron Clement, who was born in Trinidad and moved to the States in 1998, says he “fell into track” and wouldn’t have pursued it at all without a coach’s encouragement. Now, with two Olympic golds in his trophy case—he was part of the U.S.’s gold medal-winning 4x400 relay team in 2008 and after battling through injury he won the 400-meter hurdles in Rio last summer—he wants to pay it forward and encourage others to be their best.

ON WINNING THE 400-METER HURDLES IN RIO IN 2016

“I knew that I was the best in the field. I just needed to execute my race plan the best way I knew how. When the gun went off, I took off and never looked back. I concentrated on the 10 hurdles in my lane. I knew the guy from Kenya was on my shoulder and I just had to dig a little deeper to cross the line first. All the hard work I put in to get there... I wasn’t about to give that up.”

“The feeling of actually winning gold... It’s overwhelming because I was battling injuries for four or five years and it means a lot to me to inspire people to follow their dreams.”

ON CELEBRATING

“I didn’t really celebrate because I had a few competitions after the Olympics. When I was done with those and I got home, my friends and I celebrated and I enjoyed myself.”

CELEBRITY SPOTLIGHT



Kerron Clement with his 2016 Rio gold medal for the 400-meter hurdles. Clement says he's not done and is eyeing a return to the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo.

ON THE FUTURE

"I plan on running in Tokyo. This summer the world championships are in London and I'll be there. I have a bye for the U.S. trials so that's a stress reliever. I can just concentrate on peaking for August.

...I want to get into coaching. Right now I am a volunteer assistant coach at the University of Florida [where he is an alumni]. That's a passion of mine, to help kids reach their full potential."

ON NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

"Why do people even set New Year's Resolutions? That should be year-round. You should always set goals for yourself. My goals start in the offseason when I make my mind up that I want to be the best in the world, win all my races, win the Olympics. It doesn't have to be a New Year's Resolution."

WANT TO LOOK LIKE A SPRINTER? TRAIN LIKE ONE

"For anyone trying to lose weight or trying to get a lean body, I would definitely recommend a track work-

out. Try sprints of 40 and 60 meters. Sprints target every muscle in your body. In the gym you could try explosive movements like single-leg box jumps, deep squats—and do a lot of abs. That's important for us. Your core needs to be strong to transfer power."

SET UP YOUR WORKOUT

"Try four sets of six sprints of 40 yards. Rest two minutes between each sprint. If you take less rest, you open yourself up to injury. You need a good amount of recovery for it to be safe and effective."

HIS BIGGEST LIFE LESSON

"What I've learned is patience. That's the number one thing I've learned throughout my career—having injuries, having surgeries, being patient. Believe in yourself and in what you're doing. You cannot have a negative attitude. You have to stay positive and have the right people around you to motivate you. An injury, depending on what it is, doesn't have to be permanent. You can overcome it. Believe that you will get better."

DON'T CALL IT A DREAM

"Follow your dreams. A lot of people get so discouraged because someone said no to them and someone said they weren't the right fit for something. If you keep following your path, eventually you will have a breakthrough. Keep fighting. Adversity makes you stronger as a person and teaches you something. It makes you stronger mentally and physically. Maybe don't call them dreams. Call them goals."

ENCOURAGE OTHERS

"When I was younger I fell into track. I didn't know the big names in the sport. I didn't know Marion Jones and Carl Lewis. I had to learn the history of the sport. My coach in high school said I had potential to go to the Olympics and I said, 'What are you talking about?' At one point I got a sharp pain in my knee and I couldn't run at all and I went to my coach and said I had to quit. He came to my house and said, 'You can't quit.' If I had listened to myself and quit because of the pain, I would have no gold medal today. A lot of kids don't know their own potential until someone tells them."

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YOUR NEW FITNESS RULES

Robert's very own fitness commandments. Make your workouts effective—and no more complicated than they need to be.



SWEAT IS GOOD

You won't always have an hour to go to the gym. But pushups, bodyweight squats, pullups, situps, and running—are all free. Don't stress about sets and reps and total duration. If you're sweating, you're doing it right. (Read more in-depth on this in the Keep It Simple column on Pg. 61)

THE RULE OF THREE

Every complete workout program needs three things—a push, a pull, and a squat. Examples of pushes: bench press, dumbbell bench press,

pushups. Examples of pulls: pullups, dumbbell and barbell rows, and rowing machines. Examples of squats: bodyweight, barbell, dumbbell, and all varieties of lunges. Make sure your program has a healthy balance of all three and you'll avoid imbalances and injury.

SUPERSET EVERYTHING

It's much more than just an efficiency tool. You'll not only save time, you'll sweat more and keep your heart rate elevated. You can and should use supersets—performing back-to-back sets without rest—on

as many exercises as you can. I recommend supersetting opposing muscle groups, such as biceps and triceps, chest and back, and hamstrings and quads.

FLIP YOUR GRIPS

Experiment with different grips on every exercise. For example, on barbell curls, rather than a standard shoulder-width underhand grip, try an overhand grip (this is called a reverse curl) and try moving your hands out wide on one set and then in tight on the next. On machines, swap out different handles. Your

IN THE GYM: PRO TIPS



On days when you don't want to train at all, go for 10 or 15 minutes to do light cardio. Chances are, you'll want to stay and do a full training session.

body is an adaptation machine; these variables will keep it guessing and moving in the right direction.

CALORIE CYCLE

Cheat meals don't just save your sanity; they're an effective way to keep your diet working for you. Try eating as clean as possible for six days in a row and then, on the seventh day, give yourself one meal where you allow yourself to eat anything you want. The extra calories you consume will stoke your metabolism to burn at a higher rate. Just be sure to return to a normal, balanced dietary plan when your cheat meal is over. If you get lazy and let your cheat meal bleed into a full-blown cheat day, it defeats the purpose and effectiveness of the cheat meal.

JUST GET TO THE GYM

Even on days where your energy levels suck and you think you can't do much at the gym, just go and plan to do 10 or 15 minutes on the treadmill. If that's all you wind up doing, fine. But chances are by the time you get your heart rate up and

the endorphins start to flow, you're going to want to stay and do more than you planned. If you just show up, it's amazing what can happen.

FIND A STRONG PARTNER

Too often we look for partners—in the gym, at work, and in life—who are “on our level” rather than looking for people who can push and inspire us to elevate our game. In the gym, this is simple; link up with someone who's stronger and fitter than you. Will you be able to do everything that they're doing? No. But you will push yourself harder and further than you ever would alone. Apply this to all areas of your life and watch what happens.

LOVE THE PROCESS

Write those three words on a piece of paper and tape them to your mirror. Having a fitness goal is not an end-point, and the words “love the process” will help you remember that. You could do a lot of things you hate to achieve a goal, but how sustainable do you think your progress will be if you hated it every step of the way? You need to

find ways to enjoy the process of getting there. As you eat healthy food, visualize it making you stronger and healthier. As you lift weights and run, visualize your body as you want it to be. Every step of the way gets you closer. You don't have to hate any part of the goal.

BE THE WEIRD ONE

It's okay! Really. People in your workplace might think it's strange to see you doing pushups or body-weight squats (or replacing your traditional desk with a standing desk) but you can let them snicker all they want. Break every two hours for a few quick sets! If you ask me I think it's much stranger to sit in the same chair all day long. Not only do all those short sets add up over time, it will give you a better boost of energy than another cup of coffee or a snack from the vending machine ever could. When they see that it's keeping you healthy and fit and making you more productive at your job, they won't be laughing. They'll be coming to you for advice.

IN THE GYM: WORKOUT OF THE MONTH

A NEW YOU, FROM THE GROUND UP

The foundations of a healthy, strong body begin with your legs.
This year, start there.

The more muscle you have, the higher your metabolism and the more calories you burn. If that's true, then why do so many people neglect to train their legs, which is the largest muscle group? In short, because it can hurt. If you've never trained legs before, or if you haven't done much leg training in a while, then you can expect to be pretty sore even after a basic leg workout.

Well, here's a neat little trick to

deal with that soreness: TOUGH-EN UP. Seriously. It's gonna hurt a little bit. So what? You know what hurts more? Neglecting all of this important foundation work and then being too frail to enjoy your golden years. You're going to do this workout—which calls for four training days per week, two lower body days and two upper body days—and for the first two, maybe three weeks you'll resent

it. And then it will be part of your new normal. It doesn't get easier. You get stronger. That's what you should want. There is nothing to be gained by going an easier route. (And FYI, riding a stationary bike for about 10 minutes after your leg workout will help spread some of that lactic acid around and mitigate some of your soreness. It's by no means a cure-all, but it can definitely help.)



IN THE GYM: WORKOUT OF THE MONTH



THE WORKOUT

Directions: Perform the following workout for 6-8 weeks. Alternate between Leg Day and Upper Body Day for four total sessions per week.

LOWER BODY DAY

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS
Bodyweight Squat	2	15
Barbell Squat	4	10
Box Jump*	2	10
Walking Lunge	4	20
		(10 each leg)
Leg Press	3	12
Hamstring Curl	3	12
Quad Extension	3	12
Calf Raise	4	20

*(PICTURED ABOVE) Stand in front of a box or bench at least as high as your knees. Squat low to the ground and then explosively reverse direction, jumping with both feet straight onto the box. Land softly, crouching into the landing to decelerate.



UPPER BODY DAY

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS
Bench Press	4	10
SUPERSET WITH		
Barbell Row	4	10
Pushup	4	15
SUPERSET WITH		
Inverted Row*	4	10
Barbell Curl	4	10
SUPERSET WITH		
French Curl**	4	10
Military Press	4	10
SUPERSET WITH		
Plank	4	60
		seconds

*Lie under a bar set on the safety pins of a power rack. Grab the bar with an overhand grip and pull your chest to the bar, initiating the move by retracting your shoulder blades. Hold the position at the top for one second and then slowly return to the start. Keep your body straight.

**Hold a single heavy dumbbell behind your head with both hands on the inside of one of the plates; the dumbbell should be straight up and down, perpendicular to the floor. Bend your elbows all the way to let the dumbbell sink behind your head, then contract your triceps to push the weight straight up.

IN THE KITCHEN: GEAR

NEW YEAR, NEW GEAR

New picks to improve your workouts and help you stay motivated.



JJ | INSOMNIA EDITION

Reebok designed these training shoes with input from All-Pro defensive end JJ Watt. To live up to his standards, Reebok had to design some new tech, building support pillars into the midsole to keep the foam from collapsing during brutal training sessions. Considering the fact that Watt is the king gym rat of the NFL, if they're good enough for him, they'll be good enough for you.

\$99, reebok.com



BELLECORE BODY BUFFER

In a perfect world, you'd have the time and money to set up weekly masseuse appointments. In this world, you can get the Bellecore Body Buffer. Like a car buffer, but thankfully much more gentle, you rub the Bellecore wherever muscles feel tight. The dual-action oscillating action gives you a soft tissue massage that will help you recover faster, move better, and sleep soundly.

\$149, peformbetter.com



SETWAR BOA BAR CLAMPS

The crappy spring collars used in most gyms get bent out of shape and lose their strength over time, making it too hard (or too easy) to slide on and off the bar, causing plates to slip. These collars clamp tight to any bar size and lock in with a vice grip that doesn't let go.

\$64, elitefts.com



IN THE KITCHEN: RECIPE

AHI TUNA TARTARE

You don't even have to cook to enjoy this gourmet muscle builder.

SERVES 4

YOU'LL NEED

1 lb sushi-grade ahi tuna
2 tbsp shallots, minced
1 tsp sesame oil
2 tsp tahini
2 tsp soy sauce
3 tbsp capers, chopped with juice
Juice and zest of 1 lemon
Kosher salt
Black pepper, ground
4 oz green goddess dressing
1 cup watercress
1 cup frisee
2 tbsp truffle oil

MAKE IT

1) Chop tuna to desired cube sizes and place in a mixing bowl.
2) In a separate mixing bowl, make marinade by adding minced shallots, sesame oil, tahini soy sauce, lemon juice and zest, and mix. Season with kosher salt and black pepper.
3) Pour the marinade over the tuna. Allow to sit for 10-15 minutes
4) Pour the tuna into the center of a serving dish. Pour green goddess dressing around the border.
5) In a separate bowl, combine the watercress, frisee, and truffle oil and arrange over the tuna.

THE MACROS

CALORIES: 246
PROTEIN: 30 g
FAT: 11 g
CARBS: 7 g



IN THE KITCHEN: RECIPE

CHURRASCO SKIRT STEAK

Tender and packed with flavor.



SERVES 2

YOU'LL NEED

1 lb. skirt steak, cleaned by butcher
1 tbsp unsalted butter
1 tbsp lime juice
1 tsp fresh rosemary, chopped
1 tsp kosher salt
1 tsp ground black pepper

MAKE IT

1) Preheat a grill to high heat.
2) Cut steak into two portions (8 oz each).
3) Melt butter about halfway in microwave or over the heat of the grill.
4) Add lime and rosemary, and kosher salt to the half-melted butter. Brush steaks with melted butter mix and allow to sit for 15 minutes.
5) Season steaks with salt and pepper, then grill to desired doneness. Serve immediately.

THE MACROS

CALORIES: 526
PROTEIN: 61 g
FAT: 29 g
CARBS: 3 g

CHICKEN ROPA STEW

The right way to fill your belly, fuel a cold-weather workout, and help your muscles grow.

SERVES 6

YOU'LL NEED

2 lbs boneless, skinless chicken thighs
1 oz grapeseed oil
1 red pepper, diced
1 yellow pepper, diced
½ white onion, diced
½ cup ketchup
1 tsp chicken base
2 tbsp chipotle peppers, canned
1 tbsp paprika
1 tbsp smoked paprika
1 pt chicken broth
Salt
Pepper

MAKE IT

- 1) Cut the raw chicken meat into large pieces and set aside.
- 2) Heat the grapeseed oil in a large sauté pan and add the chicken. Sear for two minutes, then add the peppers and the onion. Turn down to low heat.
- 3) In a blender or food processor, combine the ketchup, chicken base, canned chipotle peppers, both paprikas, and the chicken broth. Purée. Pour the puréed mixture into the chicken pan, turn the heat back up to low-medium, and stir.
- 4) Allow the chicken stew to slowly come to a slight simmer, then turn the heat down to low. Cover the stew and allow to cook for 20 minutes, checking every 5 minutes to prevent burning.
- 5) Check the chicken for tenderness (it should pull



apart). Take all chicken pieces out, shred them, then return the pieces to the stew. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Robert's Tip:

To turn this into a heartier meal, serve over rice, or serve with traditional taco condiments such as shredded lettuce, diced tomatoes, cheese, and sour cream (or Greek yogurt).

THE MACROS

Calories: 387
Protein: 47 g
Fat: 17 g
Carbs: 11 g

IN THE KITCHEN: GEAR

FRESH STARTS

Gears picks to help you fuel healthy creativity.



◀ HAND CARVED COOKBOOK STAND

When you flip open a cookbook on a working counter surface you're just begging to get it dusted in flour, stained with oil, or soaked in water (or worse). Keep the book off the counter and open to the page you need with this gorgeous, hand-carved wooden cookbook stand that doubles as a decorative piece when not in use.

\$75, uncommongoods.com

GRAYL ULTRALIGHT

The perfect water bottle for fitness enthusiasts, amateur chefs, and globe-trotters alike. Fill this bottle with confidence wherever you are and the built-in filtration system eliminates viruses like E. coli, Salmonella, SARS, Hepatitis A and the Rotavirus. Not only that, but you get water with better flavor and odor because the bottle also removes chlorine, benzene, and particulates like silt. The replaceable cartridge is good for 300 uses. No batteries required.

\$60, thegrayl.com



COMMERCIAL KITCHEN THERMOMETER

You can get cheaper thermometers, but you get what you pay for. Saving money costs you in terms of durability and accuracy, especially when it comes to taking the temperature of a family-sized roast. This commercially-graded thermometer turns on when you insert it into the meat and off when you pull it out and gives you a digital readout on large, half-inch numbers.

\$99, thesharperimage.com



STEVE WEATHERFORD



He was one of the very best in the world at his job. He played for 10 years in the NFL, won a Super Bowl, and earned millions. When it all ended abruptly—as it always does—he was, improbably, right back on his feet and onto the next thing. Two years removed from football, Steve Weatherford's second career as a fitness personality and motivator is thriving. His future is now perhaps brighter than it was when he was playing. He owes this at least in part to a New Year's Resolution he made on January 1, 2016, and he wants to show you exactly how he did it.

BY MATT TUTHILL

STEVE WEATHERFORD

Punters are just supposed to be happy to be on the team. The fame and prestige that goes along with playing for a premiere franchise and winning a Super Bowl, as Steve Weatherford did with the NY Giants in 2012, is supposed to belong to position players who are on the field for every play.

But there isn't anything typical about Steve Weatherford's life and career. Yes, he was a punter but his insane fitness levels were what made him such a standout. In 2013 *Muscle & Fitness* magazine named him the NFL's Fittest Man. The year-round definition of his physique is the envy of many fitness competitors.

Yet, there's something about Weatherford's career that only makes sense now in the light of a recent revelation. He wore a long-sleeve spandex shirt under his pads throughout his career not to keep warm in the elements, but because he says he was embarrassed about the size of his arms.

"I was comfortable with taking my shirt off, but my arms were never up to par," he says.

Free from the constraints of sport-specific training after he retired, Weatherford made a New Year's Resolution for 2016—to grow his arms a full two inches in 90 days, bringing them up to 19 inches. He wrote down the very program that blew up his arms; he calls it #ARMageddon and it's available for purchase [HERE](#).

Considering the size and shape of his arms at that time of his resolution (about 17" and cut), the



Weatherford punts during Super Bowl XLVI. His first kick of the game pinned the Patriots at their own two, setting up a safety on the very next play.

rest of mortals are free to speculate as to the severity of Weatherford's body dysmorphia. But our interview with Weatherford isn't really about guys who want monster arms (or ladies who want to tone theirs for a strapless dress). This is all about Weatherford's methodical process for executing his resolu-

tion, which is the area where he says most resolutions fail. Whether your New Year's Resolution has to do with health and fitness or is a different goal entirely, Steve's process can be applied to get you where you want to go.

Read on and heed his advice. It might just change your life.

STEVE WEATHERFORD

Robert Irvine Magazine:
You've been in tremendous shape for a long time. You don't strike me as the kind of person that needed to make New Year's resolutions about his health and fitness each year. But last year you made a resolution to grow your arms to 19 inches.

Steve Weatherford: I've always been an overachiever, able to accomplish things in my life that nobody ever thought that I would. One of the reasons I've been able to do that is because I do an incredibly good job of creating goals and plans for myself. The reason that I've become successful is because of my execution of the plan.

Being very goal-oriented is something that's really important to me because with extreme ADHD, having a life plan, I thrive in that setting. But when I don't

have a plan or a direction for my day or for my life, I'm worthless.

RI: Are you clinically ADHD or is that something that you kind of say metaphorically?

SW: Oh, yeah. It's not just ADHD. It's an extreme case of it and it's not just as a child. I have extreme adult ADHD.

RI: How does that manifest for you?

SW: It's very difficult for me to focus on any one thing for longer than a very short period of time, but one way that I've been able to use that as an advantage is once I do create goals and a plan, I'm able to achieve a hyper-focus that people who don't have ADHD cannot achieve. The inability to focus in life in general has obviously negatively affected me as a

child and as a young adult, but the older I become the more I'm able to use what most people view as a disability and use it as an advantage. My greatest weapon as an adult is that I can craft an effective plan. That's what ARMageddon is. It is my goal from January 1st of 2016. I had other resolutions too; I wanted to become a better communicator with my wife. I want to have a 60 minute of no electronic family time—no TVs, no iPads, no iPhones, just time invested in my family to nurture that relationship.

To become a better communicator, I decided that instead of text messaging my wife as a primary source of communication, that I was going to call her on the phone more. Instead of just getting the point across via text, I would call her on the phone and that would



Follow Weatherford on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat.

STEVE WEATHERFORD

give her an opportunity to tell me her thoughts more. That has worked really well.

When I created the ARMageddon plan, it was never a business venture. It was never something I was planning on putting into an e-book. I just did it for myself. I created a very detailed plan through nutrition and training. I mapped out every single exercise variation, every set, every rep, because I knew the more detailed I went, the more time that went into creating that plan, the more effective the program was going to be. It's kind of the ideal of measuring three times and cut once.

If you look at every single game that I've played in the National Football League, you'll never see a game that I played in that I had short sleeves. That was always something about my body that bothered me—the size of my arms. When you play in the NFL, every single part of your body is covered up except for your arms and that was my weakest body part. That was the body part that I could not get to grow. That was kind of like my dirty little secret. When I retired, I wanted to fix the thing that bothered me the most. Not for anyone else, but for myself.

The reason I shared the resolution on social media is because I've always prided myself on being a source of inspiration or motiva-

tion for life in general. Whether that's as a father, as an athlete, as a gym guy, as a philanthropist. I always was very motivated to be that person in people's lives. I wanted people who viewed me as their source of inspiration to be my source of inspiration and my motivation. Because if I share that goal with them and I don't achieve it, that's going to affect my credi-

“We all do it. We all get on Facebook to check messages. Then, 45 minutes later you went down the rabbit hole of looking at what our friend from high school's ex-girlfriend's cousin is doing. That's pure waste.”

bility with that person, with that relationship that I hold so dearly.

The messages I get from people sending me gratitude for the motivation that I give them—I get more fulfillment from that than I did from any NFL game I've ever played in.

To get to 19 inches, I had to grow 2.25 inches, which I hadn't been able to do in the previous two years. How did I think I was going

to do it in 90 days? I took a risk and it was the first time in my life that I concentrated solely on that being my number one priority. In all the years prior to that, whenever I went to the gym it had to be about becoming a better football player—never about getting bigger arms

RI: And as soon as you put it out there, a ton of people were following your progress.

SW: Yeah. As the time went on, week four, week five, week six, week seven, people started to notice the size of my arms growing and they started to become more and more interested in the workouts that I was doing. Then week nine, week 10, week 11 roll around and my arms literally look like they blew up overnight. Then people are like, “Dude, you've got to put this into a program.”

I measured on the 90th day and I was 18.9 inches and I went home a little bit disappointed but at the end of the day I grew 2.24 inches in 90 days. I was obviously super proud of it but I didn't hit my goal. So I went home, and really focused on my nutrition and my water for like three days, and came back four days later all carbed up and I hit 19 inches.

RI: You said before if you don't

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have a plan you're useless. What kinds of stuff has happened in your life when you're not really focused on a goal that you're obsessing over every day? What kinds of traps are you prone to?

SW: Just wasting time. We all do it. We all get on to Facebook because we wanted to check a messages. Then, 45 minutes pass and next thing we know, we haven't even looked at all of our messages and we went down the rabbit hole of looking at what our friend from high school's ex-girlfriend's cousin is doing. You know what I mean? That's pure waste. That's not being efficient with the opportunity that every day brings in our life. Every

day is a blessing and if I don't have a goal and a plan, I waste my life.

RI: To say you were ashamed of your arms is interesting. I remember that you wore spandex over your arms, but they were still so well defined that you could see the cuts through the shirt. That almost seems to be bordering on body dysmorphia, but maybe playing in the NFL will do that.

SW: I don't know if I was ashamed of my arms, but think about it this way: when somebody gives you the title of being the fittest man in the NFL (which *Muscle & Fitness* did in 2013),

you have to live up to that title. Although I did believe that I was the fittest man in the NFL, I wasn't the biggest, I wasn't the strongest, but even previous to getting that title, it was always something that bothered me because my arms were really stubborn and it didn't look like they matched the rest of my body. I didn't have trouble taking my shirt off, but my arms were lagging

behind.

RI: Why would women want to do ARMageddon?

SW: Well, I've had hundreds of women that have done this program and the reasoning for them is different every single time. Some women want to do ARMageddon because they have a wedding day coming up and they have to wear a strapless dress. Or maybe another woman wants to do it because they've seen the success stories of other men who have done it who have actually lost three inches off of their waist and increase the size of their arms by an inch and a half. They want to lose weight and they want to turn their flabby arms into harder, more shapely arms.

Remember, there's a big difference between the way men and women are able to build muscle and strength. I would be insanely impressed if a woman is able to put a full inch on their arms during ARMageddon. Women don't have the same testosterone levels, and the way a woman's muscle fibers are constructed, they will increase strength on a massive scale before their muscle fibers will actually start to do any type of growth.

RI: What is your all-time best piece of nutrition advice?

SW: Everything in moderation. I think the bodybuilder mentality of living on chicken and rice is not healthy. I think we all have, in the last couple of years, realized that



Weatherford in the middle of one of his ARMageddon workouts. Men who do the workouts can grow their arms exponentially; women can use it to tone their arms for a strapless dress.

STEVE WEATHERFORD

our favorite bodybuilders from 10 years ago are getting hip replacements. They're having heart attacks. They're having all of these physical issues and it's because of bodybuilding. They're supposed to be the picture of physical health and a picture of human capabilities, but that lifestyle, and I'm not just talking about the drugs that they take, but their diet and training as well, isn't very healthy. The training that they're doing is negatively affecting their life.

I have to take my own advice a lot of times because I'm a very obsessive and excessive person. When I set a goal for myself I become so hy-

per-focused on it that I will neglect relationships, I'll neglect my own health, I'll neglect sleeping because I'll be so focused and so consumed with achieving that goal that I forget about all the other things in my life that are important. That's a piece of advice that I try to remind myself of: everything in moderation. I think that bodes well for nutrition, fitness, and relationships. Vegetables are great for you, but if you only ate one kind of vegetable

indefinitely, your body would develop a sensitivity to it. You can love to work out, but you can work out so much that you actually get weaker. In relationships, you could be so madly in love that you want to spend all of your time with that person. Then when you do, what happens? The pendulum always swings back.

RI: People have a really hard time with the idea of starting from scratch. They feel like starting a new job, starting a new program, starting a new diet—it makes it feel like they're giving up on everything they've been

doing. Then you take you, at 33 years old, you transitioned out of the NFL and seamlessly moved into a new career and have actually built more of a following outside of football. That's unprecedented because you didn't play a high-profile position. What enabled you to make such a smooth transition?

SW: Well, it may seem from the outside looking in that it's been a seamless transition and like, "Oh, he decided, after being one of the best in the world at what he did for 10 years, now he's just going to retire from that and try to become one of the best in the world at



Weatherford, right, and Lawrence Tynes celebrate winning the NFC Championship game and earning a trip to the Super Bowl in 2012.

STEVE WEATHERFORD

something else. Must be so nice. What a charmed life.”

But I started preparing myself for this very transition five years ago. I was doing some soul searching after my sixth year in the NFL and I’m like, “What do I want to do when football is over? What do I want to do with my life?” I started to realize I’m not going to be able to play this game forever. I started to ask myself, “What am I truly passionate about? What brings me the most life fulfillment?” I think about all these different occupations and professions and the thing that I always kept coming back to, and the only thing that’s really remained constant in my life over the past 20 years is fitness

It’s the only reason I was able to earn a scholarship to college, play in the NFL, have the career that I did, win a Super Bowl, enable my family to enjoy a comfortable lifestyle...

It’s all because I committed myself to a lifetime of health and wellness when I was 14.

One thing that benefited me was my self-identity, how I viewed myself, was never what I did. I played football as a professional. I never viewed myself as a professional football player. I think that’s really benefited me because I don’t feel like I lost my identity when I retired. Now that I’m not a professional football player, that chapter of my life is over but my life isn’t over, you know? That’s why a lot of

professional athletes struggle, and that’s why the divorce rate is 75%. Three out of four people within 24 months of their career being over or them retiring, are either bankrupt or divorced.

RI: What kinds of mistakes you see people make with their New Year’s resolutions?

SW: It’s pretty simple. People get very excited and they set these very lofty dreams and expectations and goals and resolutions, which is great. I encourage peo-

“You want to set big goals and dreams for the next year, but you also need to lay out your plan and figure out exactly how you’re going to execute it.”

ple to do that, but they’re doing themselves a disadvantage because they’re only getting one part of the equation correct. You want to set big goals and dreams for the next year, but you also need to lay out your plan and figure out exactly how you’re going to execute it. How many people do that?

The formula that has made me successful is very, very simple. I use it every single day of my life. It’s very consistent. It’s applicable to every facet of life. It can

be applicable for the 14-year-old kid that’s 108 pounds as a freshman in high school like I was, or it’s applicable to the 62-year-old grandmother. It’s applicable to the person that’s 23 years old and they don’t know what they want to do with their life once they graduate from college.

I call it the Formula for Prosperity. It’s a four-step process. The first step is identifying your vision or your goal. The second step is setting micro-goals to be able to make that dream come true, but

then the third step is to write a detailed plan on how to achieve the micro-goals. Everyone does part one. A few people do part two, and far fewer do part three. The fourth step is where 90% of people fail in making their dreams become their everyday reality. That’s the execution of the plan to achieve the goals to make the dream come true. Execution is just another fancy word for

hard work.

I used the formula for prosperity to get into the NFL. I knew I was going to have to get bigger, faster, stronger, so I created goals. In the first year, I want to get to 140 pounds. Then the next year I want to get to where I can bench press 200 pounds. Then you’re constantly creating micro-goals that are going to get you closer and closer to the end goal. Like anyone else, I can become overwhelmed by the big dreams and goals that I create

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for myself. However, I am humble enough to seek advice from mentors in my life.

When I knew I needed to get bigger, faster, stronger at 14 years old, I didn't know how to do it. You couldn't get on the Internet. That didn't exist. I would go to the library and I would read books and then I would also go to the biggest, strongest guy in the gym at the YMCA in Terre Haute, Indiana, and I would ask him questions. I probably annoyed the crap out of this guy. His name was Jim Crews. He played basketball at Indiana State. I just followed him around like a puppy dog. I did everything that he did and I asked a lot of questions. I was able to take that knowledge and that advice and the knowledge that I learned at the library from reading books, and I was able to get bigger, faster, stronger. I graduated high school at 220 pounds. That's 112 pounds I gained in four and a half years of high school.

RI: What about balance? I see a lot of dads get out of shape. I see a lot of moms get out of shape. The child becomes the focus and then it kind of throws everything into chaos. You've got four kids. How do you balance the gym commitments with everything else you're doing because most people can't even do nine to five and the gym. It's too hard for them to put together on a consistent basis.

SW: One of my resolutions for 2017 is to find better balance. I didn't get enough sleep in 2016 and I know I need to do better with that. I think what's key to remember is that family and work—those things are not an obligation. They are an opportunity and a blessing. So how do I fulfill the opportunity, obligation,

and blessing of being a father and a husband, but then also build a business around my passion in fitness? It's really, really simple man. If things in your life like your goals and your dreams are important to you, you're not going to find time to put the work in to get closer to them. You will make the time.



Follow Steve on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).



JAY CARDIELLO

To his many A-list clients, Jay Cardiello has been a Godsend. His scientifically-grounded behavioral change program hasn't just transformed the lives of his clients, it is now being implemented by the medical community. Here, he tells *RI Magazine* how to lay the foundations of real change and make the most out of not just 2017, but the rest of your life.

BY MATT TUTHILL

JAY CARDIELLO

Jay Cardiello has a problem with the term celebrity trainer. No matter how it's used, it's a bit of misnomer. Are you trying to say the trainer himself is a celebrity? ("You won't find any paparazzi waiting outside my place," Cardiello laughs.) Or are you trying to use the term as an occupation, as in, he or she trains celebrities?

It's funny that he loathes the term so much because you can make a strong argument that Cardiello is both.

He may have humility, but at least within the fitness world, Cardiello does have some celebrity. He recently starred on ABC's "My Diet is Better Than Yours" reality show, is the author of the highly successful Cardio Core 4x4 program, and perhaps most impressively, pioneered a behavioral change program for the obese that is now implemented in Mt. Sinai Hospital systems. If it's pure star power you're after, Cardiello's client roster is littered with A-list actors and athletes from Jennifer Lopez and Sofia Vergara to Ryan Seacrest and 50 Cent.

But in either instance, the term celebrity trainer is one that Cardiello believes the public places far too much faith in.

"What good is my JCORE program going to do for anyone who isn't ready to change?" Cardiello says.

And so Cardiello's approach with clients hinges on being able to change what's between their ears. By dedicating himself to the hard work of behavior change—and

not just asking clients to execute a workout template—Cardiello has wound up on the wrong end of a few uncomfortable, and loud, conversations with clients. Nevertheless, he says, "I don't get frustrated with clients... When they're telling me, 'I can't. You don't understand. Go f\$%k yourself,' and on and on... What they're really saying is, 'I need help. Please don't quit on me. I need you.'"

Read on for our one-on-one with Cardiello to hear him explain in his own words how to plant the seeds for lasting success in your life.

ROBERT IRVINE MAGAZINE: Why do so many New Year's Resolutions fail?

JAY CARDIELLO: You have to understand this. When we do our New Year's resolutions, we do them half assed. We're half drunk. We're half paying attention. We're watching the game. We're half hungover. If you want a resolution, you've got to resolve. We don't do that. You go on a diet and say, "I've got to eat this food." But food is just the effect. It's not the root cause. Exercise, or lack of it, is an effect. It's not the root cause. People need to really



Jay with his son in New York City. Follow Jay on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) and visit his [WEBSITE](#).

JAY CARDIELLO



Jay starred on ABC's *My Diet Is Better Than Yours* reality show.

understand the root cause.

If you're going to really change, you have to have a purpose. You have to know your why—why you're doing what you want to do. There has to be something purposeful about it.

Goals don't make sense to me. Not goals like, "I want to lose 25 pounds." That's a statement that pushes you. Purpose pulls you. Saying, "I want to be the first person in my family not to have diabetes," or "I want to be the first person from my family to graduate college," those are pulling factors. We have to identify our purpose. What do we want? Why do we want it? Why is it going to be impactful?

After that, it has to be practiced

day in and day out. I always say this to people: I'm not a fan of the fitness industry. I'm not a fan of the diet industry. They don't make resolutions and they don't make goals stick. When Roger Bannister ran the four-minute mile, what he first did was he changed his mindset and said, "This is what I'm going to do." He visualized it. He didn't practice any harder.

The why factor, you have to have that purpose. Each and every day you have to practice and create rituals that serve your purpose. And it has to be specific, not, "I want to lose weight," or, "I want to be healthier." You need to identify it a little more. They have to say, "I want to be healthier because it is

going to enable me to do X, Y, and Z."

I say people tell me all the time, "I want to make more money." "Ok, here's a dollar. You just made more money." You met your goal but it wasn't impactful. You have to have those pulling factors because we all live in this desired state—and we never find the chance or the opportunity to get to that must state, so you have to identify your purpose. It has to have a why factor to it.

RI: You developed a behavioral change program that was implemented at Mt. Sinai Hospital systems. How did that come about and how does it work?

JC: A few years back, I developed a program called Off The Scale. I'm one of the founders of it. I'm no longer with it. No I'm concentrating on a few other things in the behavioral cognitive category. But what I identified is this: that 70% of America is overweight or obese. Chronic conditions are on the rise at an all-time high. People know they need to exercise and eat right, but they are fearful. People are scared. People want to do it, they buy the product, but they don't use it. They're in a desired state.

What I figured out is that people need a why factor and they have to have a purpose for coming. You have to identify things that are very simple for people to understand. I talk a bit about colors and chromotherapy and how red and yellow and orange excite your appetite and how blue naturally suppresses your

appetite and how green helps you go to sleep. I identified the behavioral change because if you want to change someone, you have to focus on their behavior and their mindset. Everybody has a root cause. People just don't wake up and start using drugs and alcohol. There was a why factor behind that decision.

If you look at drug and alcohol rehab, they don't focus on drugs or alcohol. I think that's the big picture in fitness that we totally miss out on. How could we focus on the specifics of a training program or a diet when the person is overweight or obese? I'm not talking about someone getting in shape for a bodybuilding competition. I'm talking about a person who is 30 pounds overweight—a high BMI with chronic conditions and they've been in this state for a while. When you have someone like that, focusing on food and fitness is beyond me. You don't do that in drug rehab. They go after the root of the problem and they get sustainable outcomes

That's what I identified when I implemented the program Off The Scale and developed it is that I want to identify why you do what you do. Then I'm going to give you strategies that you can practice. It's a 12-week program and each week,

we're going to have a different topic. We meet every week and we discuss this topic to make a small behavioral change and each day, you're going to have a daily task to perform a small ritual. Even the way you talk to yourself, we have ways that teach people how to talk to themselves better. Most of us talk poorly to ourselves. We would never hang

“We have the best foods. We have the best gyms. We have the best trainers. It's all there, but we need to change our minds.”

out with a person who talked to us like we talk to ourselves.

RI: As you met with people, what are some common reasons why people can't find their why? Because eventually people stop caring. They say, “Oh well, this is how I am, I should just accept it.”

JC: A lot of it goes back to negative self-talk. What you say is what you become. It's also who you at-

tract. You hear people all the time, “I can never find a boyfriend.” “I can never find a girlfriend.” You're not finding them because you're telling yourself that. After that, your support system is critical. You are the average of the five people you hang with the most, so we talk about, so I focus on what are you saying, who you hanging out with.

Looking big picture, you have to address the idea of time because people think they have no time. You don't have the time to be healthy, but you have the time to be sick? Makes no sense. People think there's so much time that needs to be implemented into a healthy lifestyle.

What I do with people is show them that you do have the time. It can be so simple. Complexity is the enemy of execution. You start with little things. You put your fork in the other hand. You slow down the process so you're not wolfing down your food and looking for more before your brain even knows you're full.

One of the biggest barriers is, “I don't have the money.” But it costs more to be sick than it does to be healthy. People just don't know, so I educate people.

Did you know that eye level is called the bullseye zone if you go shopping? Generally speaking,

JAY CARDIELLO

those products are more expensive. Brands and marketers pay to be in that eye level, so look up and look down. You'll save money. Buy your fruits and vegetables frozen. You know you purchase the fruit. You put it on the table. Five days later, you're pissed off because you didn't eat it.

A big thing, too, is guilt. People feel guilty about taking care of themselves.

RI: You see that a lot with parents. They feel like they should be dedicating all that time to their family, that it's selfish to take the

time to go to the gym.

JC: Right. But what's the first thing they show you on an airplane? They show you how to put that air mask on in the event of an emergency. And you HAVE to put it on yourself first and then take care of your kid. Because if you don't have oxygen, you can't help anyone.

We need to take care of ourselves more. Go to any old age home, walk down the hall and talk to them a little bit. Almost all of them will say, "I wish I would've done this. I wish I would've done that." I always tell people never give yourself the opportunity to ask what if. We need to

start living. We need to start living if death was at the end of the day and we don't. We just don't.

RI: That's a great metaphor about the plane. I just saw one of your videos on Instagram where you were as fired up as you sound right now. Where does your passion for this come from? It seemed like when you made that video like you had just seen someone let the opportunity slip through their fingers, like you had just watched somebody ruin their whole life.

JC: It's not like that. It's like this: I've been through so much shit in my life. I've been through every sort of emotion from having nothing to breaking my spine. I've been through everything you can envision. I learned that I have to be my greatest fan and generally, when I am talking like that, like what you saw on Instagram, I'm talking to myself. I try to give. You want to be successful? You've got to give more than you're getting.

I have more fear than anybody I know. I am not going back to that point where I was. It's a must for me that I have to succeed. There are days that I hate getting out of bed. There's days that I don't want to train somebody. There's days that I don't want to go up to the hospital. There's days that I don't want to develop a program. There's days that I don't want to listen to people talk or get on stage, but the fact of the matter is that if I don't, there's



Cardello has been critical of the fitness industry, but recently linked up with [Genuine Health](#), a natural supplement maker he recommends to his clients.

JAY CARDIELLO

an opportunity for me to go back to where I was.

My dad told me this one day and it stuck with me. We were watching a football game and he asked, “Who’s the greatest player out there?” I started with the quarterback and I named them all, and he nixed every one of them. He said, “No, no, no. It’s somebody in the stands who never gave themselves the opportunity to be the best they can be and they’re going to live the rest of their life questioning what they could have been. Then they’ll convince themselves that they couldn’t have been that and they’ll say they were never good enough. They label themselves. They become depressed. They become an alcoholic. They wear somebody else’s jersey, praise that person. Right before they die, they say, ‘What if?’”

So I can tell you that if God came down in her infinite wisdom and said, “Today is your day and Jay, you’re going to leave,” I would say, “Okay. I’m good,” because I don’t go to bed tired. I go to bed completely exhausted. I’m doing everything that I can.

RI: How did you break your spine?

JC: I was a long jumper in track and field. I was at a 19 In 1996. I was on the national championship team at the University of Arkansas. I was at practice and I reached out too far in a jump. It shocked my spine, fractured my coccyx. They fused the lower lumbar and then

through the years, I got 11 more surgeries, everything from 6 knees, to hip surgery, to shoulder surgeries, to all that because once your body becomes asymmetrical, things start to go, so I had to stop.

I had to learn to listen to my body and figure out what’s what’s wrong with my body. That’s how I got into the training. I transferred to William and Mary and began coaching there and then went to the NFL and started coaching and then all these things... 21 years later, I’m

here. Before that, I was headed to law school.

RI: What were some of the most valuable things you learned during recovery?

JC: I had to learn that more is less, less is more. A few years ago I wrote a book called Cardio 4x4 which showed all you need is 20 minutes. Back in ‘99, when I was with the Buccaneers, I introduced them to prehab” They’re like, “What’s that?” I was like, “Listen, you prehab



Jay’s star pupil, 50 Cent, has appeared on the cover of *Muscle & Fitness* three times. Other clients of note include Ryan Seacrest, Sofia Vergara, Julianne Hough, Jenniver Lopez, Tyson Chandler, and Minka Kelly.

JAY CARDIELLO

your body to avoid injury so you don't have to rehab it." It's all about sustainability. That's why one of the biggest things that I focus on with anybody I train, from Kevin Love to 50 Cent, is sleep.

Sleep is not sexy and it doesn't make trainers money and it doesn't get you on Instagram posts, and that pisses me off because it's one of the greatest ways to strengthen your immune system and to provide proper growth to your muscles. I don't know why we don't focus on it more.

RI: Yeah. It's one of those things that people would prefer to just

totally dispense with. In business and school and other places, people take a lot of pride in working—or playing—so hard that they don't sleep. When they're young, it works, and then they hit 30, they feel like an old cripple and they can't figure out why.

JC: Sleep deprivation is a huge problem. I've worked with NFL teams and NBA teams. This is not been proven by a study, but I believe it's one of the biggest things that actually shortens a career.

RI: You work with so many top folks who are very highly motivated, but have you had clients who

frustrated you when you realized that they didn't really want it and no matter what you were going to do, you weren't going to be able to help them?

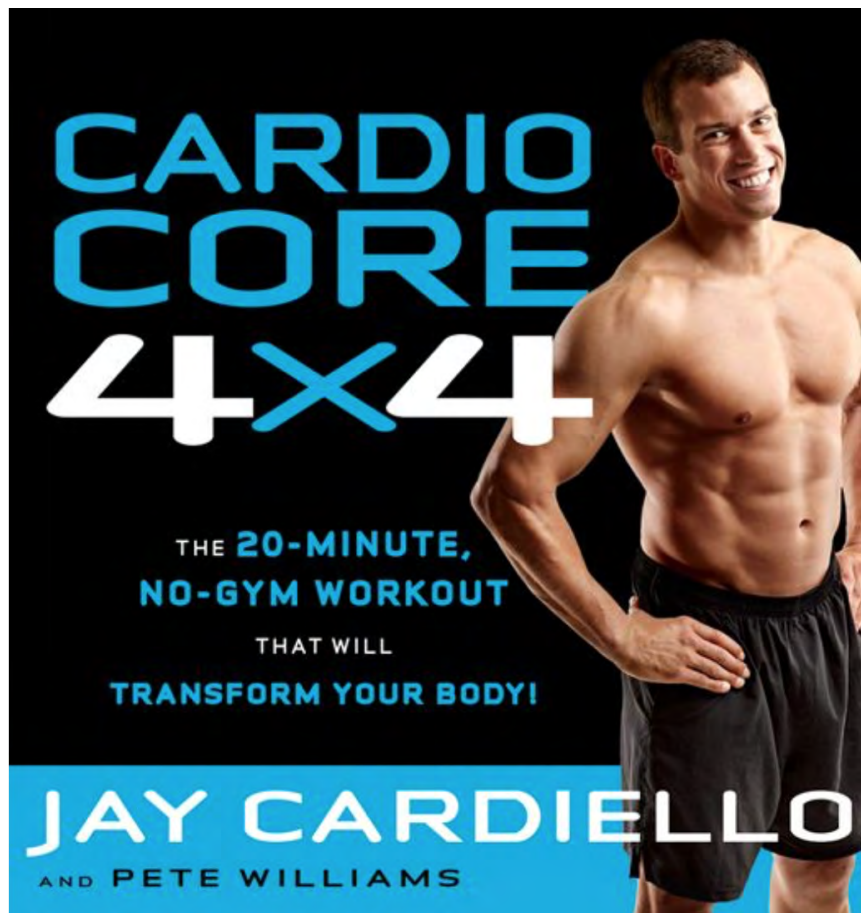
JC: I don't get frustrated with clients. I've never gotten frustrated with a client. The clients get frustrated enough with themselves. When they're telling me, "I can't. You don't understand. Go f\$%k yourself," and on and on... What they're really saying is, "I need help. Please don't quit on me. I need you." If you want a good tree to grow, a good plant, you got to give it good soil. So yeah, I have clients that screamed at me, yelled at me, and cursed me out. You just sit there. If you ever saw Good Will Hunting, you just do that. You stand there, take it, and say "It's going to be okay. It's not your fault. It's okay. It's not your fault."

RI: People associate you with your top clients, what is one factor that they all have that helps make them successful?

JC: First I would say success should not be quantified by money or fame. You have a lot of janitors who are more successful than I'll ever be because what they're enjoying life and living it with death around the corner as opposed to someone going to Goldman Sachs and crushing out a billion dollars and having a big bonus and then at the end of the day, Johnny Walker and Ben & Jerry show up to hang out with you. Success isn't based



JAY CARDIELLO



You can preview and buy Jay's Cardio Core 4x4 program on Amazon by clicking [HERE](#).

upon upon money. It's based upon being fulfilled with the life that you have. This an opportunity and a gift.

What I will say is that my clients do have one thing in common: the willingness, the guts, to say to themselves, "I can be better." That's it. They take the fear and they go out there and they play. They're willing to go out there and let the critics criticize, let the haters hate. More so, they're willing to say at the end of the day, "I gave it my all." More than anything, they understand that if they keep giving, they can't help but succeed.

If you give to the world and give to yourself, you will succeed. Give yourself better education. What I mean by education is reading

every f\$%king day. Education without action is not powerful. Education with action is powerful. People need to work on themselves more, not on their craft. I've never read a fitness book, even though I've written one. I read books about psychology, philosophy. I read about different religions. You read about how to have a rapport with people.

The six inches between the ears is what separates the healthy from the unhealthy and there's more unhealthy right now. We have the best foods. We have the best gyms. We have the best trainers. It's all there, but we need to change our minds.

You can't change anybody. Nobody else can make you happy.

Nobody else can make you sad. No Jay Core program is going to change that. No P90X program is going to change that. No organic ingredients is going to change that.

There's a huge disconnect between root cause and surface solutions, but we don't want to deal with root causes. Because if we actually dealt with that, it wouldn't be sexy. It wouldn't make you a billion dollars. So we hawk our programs and post on Instagram. We look good. We wear a bikini. We say, "Look at this butt." We do some sit ups and pushups and we're cool. Doesn't make sense to me. It really doesn't, but it does make sense right before a person dies.

CLEAN & SIMPLE



Get your diet back on the right track with these easy, nutrient-dense recipes.

BERRY BANANA & SPINACH SMOOTHIE

SERVES 2

YOU'LL NEED

1 cup orange juice
1 cup frozen blueberries
1 cup frozen strawberries
1 cup frozen raspberries
1 banana
2 cups loosely packed spinach
Ice, as needed

MAKE IT

1) Add the orange juice, fruit, and spinach to a blender. Blend on medium-high speed until all the spinach is blended and there are no visible green specks.
2) Add additional ice cubes for an icier drink.

THE MACROS

CALORIES: 222
PROTEIN: 16 g
FAT: 1 g
CARBS: 40 g

CLEAN & SIMPLE RECIPES



CHICKEN & QUINOA “STIR FRY” WITH LEEKS AND PEAS

SERVES 4

YOU’LL NEED

1 lb cooked pulled chicken breast
1 cup quinoa
2 cups water
Kosher salt
Pepper
2 tbsp grapeseed oil
2 leeks, whites only, diced
1 cup peas
3 cups spinach
2 tsp grated lemon zest
½ cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

MAKE IT

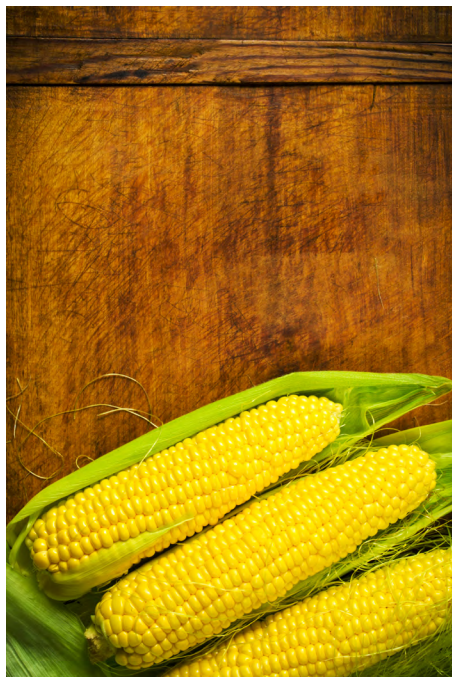
1) In a medium saucepan, combine the quinoa, 2 cups water and 1/4 teaspoon salt and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and steep for 15 minutes, covered.
2) Heat the oil in a medium skillet over medium heat. Add the leeks, season with 1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, until tender, 7 to 8 minutes. Add the chicken and saute for 3-5 minutes more to heat the chicken through then add the peas and spinach and lemon zest. Saute until the spinach is wilted, stirring occasionally, and until heated

through, about 3 minutes. Stir in the parsley. Fold the mixture into the quinoa.

THE MACROS

CALORIES: 439
PROTEIN: 41 g
FAT: 14 g
CARBS: 40 g

CHILLED STEAK, CORN, AND BLACK BEAN WRAP



SERVES 4

YOU'LL NEED

1 cup fresh whole-kernel corn off the cob
½ cup chopped fresh cilantro
4 tbsp minced red onion
4 tbsp dice red tomato
4 tbsp fresh lime juice
1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
1 tsp ground cumin
Salt
Freshly ground black pepper
1 can black beans (low sodium)
1.5 lb grilled skirt steak
8 fat-free flour tortillas (2 per person)
1 cup low fat shredded Monterey Jack cheese with jalapeño peppers

MAKE IT

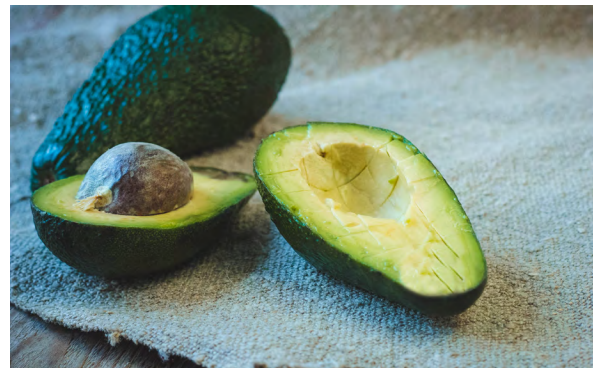
1) Combine corn, cilantro, onion, tomato, lime juice, olive oil, cumin, salt, and pepper in a mixing bowl.
2) Arrange about 1/3 cup steak down center of each tortilla. Top each tortilla with about 1/3 cup corn and black bean mix and 2 tablespoons cheese; roll up.
3) Wrap sandwiches in aluminum foil or wax paper. Chill and serve.

THE MACROS

CALORIES: 440
PROTEIN: 33 g
FAT: 19 g
CARBS: 36 g

CLEAN & SIMPLE RECIPES

SPINACH SALAD WITH TUNA AND AVOCADO



SERVES 4

YOU'LL NEED

3 tbsp fresh lemon juice
1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
1 tbsp water
1 tsp Dijon mustard
2 ripe Hass avocado
1 pinch cayenne pepper
Salt
2 tbsp fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves, chopped
2 tbsp snipped fresh chives chopped
4 cup baby spinach
16 cherry tomatoes, halved
1 cup cucumber diced
1/2 cup carrots shredded
1/2 cup broccoli sprouts
2 cups cooked quinoa or freekeh, cooked per package instructions
1 pound tuna packed in water (low sodium)

MAKE IT

1) In blender, combine lemon juice, oil, water, mustard, 1 avocado, cayenne pepper, salt and pepper. Puree until smooth, scraping container occasionally. Stir in parsley and chives.
2) In large bowl, toss spinach, tomatoes, cucumber, carrots with the grain and the tuna, toss with the dressing. Divide among serving plates. Thinly slice the remaining avocado and arrange on top of salads and garnish with the sprouts.

THE MACROS

CALORIES: 457
PROTEIN: 36 g
FAT: 20 g
CARBS: 28 g

BLAZING NEW TRAILS



Saddled with a massive amount of debt, The Trails restaurant had a menu too cheap to get back into the black, and owner Stacey Poon-Kinney was on the verge of closing. Then *Restaurant: Impossible* showed up. By working with a talented staff already in place, Robert was able to help The Trails make several key adjustments to steer things back in the right direction.

BY MATT TUTHILL

RESTAURANT: IMPOSSIBLE

The Trails wasn't the first restaurant to have some good food, a clean kitchen, quality service, and still find itself deep in the red. When Stacey Poon-Kinney and her father Larry Poon bought the San Diego restaurant that she would turn into the Trails, they didn't know that the price they paid, \$225,000, was far too much. When Robert arrived to film this episode of *Restaurant: Impossible*, he was blown away by the cost, estimating the price of the kitchen equipment, plates, utensils, etc., to be worth only \$20,000.

"It's not like buying a doctor's office where you're buying a patient list," Robert told her. "This is a restaurant, a transient business."

Not just a transient business, but Stacey and her father only leased their space, they didn't own it. On top of that, the original floor plan had just 38 seats. After an expansion to 83 seats, which cost an additional \$275,000, Stacey says, "We just weren't getting the volume we needed to keep up with our new costs." Add to the debt another \$100,000 to keep up with payroll, and the restaurant was a full \$600,000 in the hole, losing an additional \$5,000 per month.

"That's my dad's retirement," Stacey told Robert. "It's a lot of pressure."

"I can see the tears behind your smiles," Robert said.

Two days and \$10,000 later, Stacey and her father got the patented *R:I* storybook ending. But six years later, did that ending stick? We investigate...



Stacey Poon-Kinney with her father, Larry Poon. Larry incurred a tremendous amount of debt to buy The Trails and keep it afloat—about \$600,000—but Stacey is now able to make large monthly repayments.

WHY SHE APPLIED

One of Poon-Kinney's customers, a retired PR professional, suggested they go on *Restaurant: Impossible* simply as a PR stunt. The customer had no idea that The Trails was actually failing. So when Poon-Kinney got the note—an ad from a newspaper calling for failing restaurants to apply to the show, which was scouting locations for its second season—she set it aside to think about.

At that point in December of 2010, the idea of a reality show actually being able to save the restaurant seemed like a moonshot. Stacey had fallen on some very hard times.

"I had gone months without paying myself, I had a brand new baby, I had my power shut off," Stacey says. "I had a one-year-old and a five-year-old at home, it's Christmastime, and I couldn't buy them anything; we had Christmas because of the good grace of other people."

After talking it over with her father, she decided to apply. Producers called her up to get see if The Trails, which was hemorrhaging money, would make it to July when they could start filming. It would mean incurring more losses, but she and her father decided to stick it out.

RESTAURANT: IMPOSSIBLE



AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The first thing Robert took issue with was pricing. The Trails was serving up some very good, home-cooked breakfast and lunch items, but charging far too little. Stacey had considered food costs and labor when making prices, but hadn't built in much of the rest of her overhead. Besides pointing out that The Trails needed a significant price hike to its menu, Robert also demanded that dinner service be added.

Stacey had previously tried to have dinner service, but failed.

"We had a diner feel for breakfast and lunch and for dinner we were trying to do fine diner," she says. "It just confused people."

Robert, though, saw that the chef, Lisa, was capable of running a very good dinner service. He coached her up on how to create some new menu items, including a roasted tomato cous-cous, and ginger-tomato soup and grilled cheese combo, which remain on the menu as of this writing.



Top, the redesign of The Trails. Bottom, Robert and Stacey doing PR on a San Diego radio show.

RESTAURANT: IMPOSSIBLE



Follow
Stacey on
[Twitter](#)
and
[Instagram](#).

As for the space itself, Robert's designer, Taniya Nayak helped transform a room which was bright and welcoming, but lacked a memorable pop of color and design. She added family portraits and splashes of bright green and mustard yellow paint that stood out in a surprisingly effective way.

"I was standing out back getting mic'd to see the restaurant for the first time and I see these painters come out with this paint and it looks so garish in the buckets, and I said, 'Oh, I hope that's not what they used,'" Stacey recalls. "When I walked in it couldn't have been better. Those were the colors but it was beautiful. I was so happy with how the space reflected my personal style. Taniya did a magical job.

Builder Tom Bury knocked down

a room divider (he was forced to when Robert, unprompted, went after it with a sledgehammer) and added simple planter boxes with white birch branches that reached up to the ceiling. It helped add a cozy, contained feeling, yet kept the room open.

BUSINESS

While filming, Robert and Stacey went on a local radio show to promote the grand reopening. Normally, the massive influx of business doesn't happen until the show aired on Food Network, but in Stacey's case, the boom was immediate.

"We weren't staffed for dinner and we got very busy, so everyone was running in 18 hour-shifts," Stacey says. "I had to hire an additional 13 people."

But the proof is always in the long-term effects, and there might not be a more dramatic turnaround than the one that happened at The Trails. Gross revenue in 2010 was \$400,000. In 2016, it was \$1.3 million, a staggering, more than three-fold increase in business. Because of reruns, customers still come in from all over the country, wanting to see the transformation for themselves.

Stacey's debt to her father has been worked down considerably, and they're on a comfortable course to repay the debt in full, making large monthly payments. The electricity in the Poon-Kinney house is also back on and Stacey and her family have been able to get away on vacation a few times, an unthinkable proposition just a few short years ago. Stacey has also been able to

RESTAURANT: IMPOSSIBLE

delegate more, and was able to drop her hours, which sometimes hit 100 per week, down to the 40-65 range.

Stacey also has a budding TV career thanks to appearing on *R:I*, as well as a 50th episode follow-up special. A local producer contacted her to host a pilot for a food-themed show, and Stacey auditioned for and was accepted to the 9th season of *Next Food Network Star*. She made it to the very end, the last contestant eliminated before pilots were filmed. She was undeterred, filming frequently for local TV. At this moment, though, she says her primary focus is on her family and the restaurant.

This year, however, will present some unique challenges for *The Trails*. Just last year, when the state of California raised the minimum wage by \$1.50, dinner service only broke even. Minimum wage went up another dollar on January 1, 2017, putting Stacey in an incredibly tough position.

"That's a \$2.50 increase per worker, per hour, in a single calendar year," Stacey says. "And we pay taxes on all of that. That moves dinner into an unprofitable area. People are on tight budgets. There's only so much I can pass off to the customers in terms of costs."

Running the numbers, Stacey estimated that dinner could lose \$30,000 this year. Shortly after the new year began, dinner service was discontinued.

Nevertheless, she believes—and has the hard numbers to back her up—that *The Trails* is built to be

a powerhouse at breakfast and lunch, and will be a profitable, sustainable business for years to come.

FINAL ASSESSMENT

Looking back on her experiences, she says applying to be on the show was one of the best decisions she ever made.

"The restaurant would have definitely gone out of business," Stacey says. "We wouldn't have made it to that summer if we didn't know the show was coming. Working with Robert was an exercise in humility and an opportunity to reassess what worked for our business and what we needed. He was so wonderful and presenting ideas and ways that we could change in order to be successful. I am so grateful for everything he and his team did while they were here."

She also says that follow-up calls

from producers in the years that followed were reassuring, "They don't just leave you high and dry." Producers even asked her to mentor other restaurant owners who were appearing on the show; she coached them through the tenuous spot between when the show films and when it airs.

"I just really appreciate all of the opportunities that came out of this," Stacey says. "How much Robert can inspire people with his burly, icy stare... it's amazing. He uses his talents and his gifts for good and I am so grateful that we were recipients of that. People ask me all the time, 'Is he really that mean?' and I say 'He's not mean at all! Not even a little. He means for people to succeed and he means to motivate people.' It's like being a parent. Sometimes you need to motivate in ways that are uncomfortable. I respect that so much."



Stacey has shown an uncanny ability to take lemons and make lemonade. After appearing on *Restaurant: Impossible*, her business is thriving and she made a deep run into *Next Food Network Star* and makes regular appearances on local TV.



WHAT DREAMS MAY COME

Nicholas Irving is better known as The Reaper, an Army Ranger sniper and machine gunner with 33 kills in a single deployment and an unconfirmed kill total that could easily be into triple digits. But Irving, now 30 and retired from the military, has been haunted by nightmares from the day of his first kill. Since then, his life has been a roller coaster of alcoholism, PTSD, and suicidal thoughts, including one failed attempt. He says there is light at the end of the tunnel now; in November of 2016, his wife gave birth to the couple's first child and he has been clean and sober since. But every night, his enemies still rise from the dead to haunt his dreams.

BY MATT TUTHILL

THE REAPER

The nightmare is always the same. The first man that Nicholas Irving ever killed appears as a ceiling fan above his bed. The man's head becomes the center of the fan; his arms and legs are the blades. Irving is pinned down and can't move. The fan spins faster and faster and descends toward Irving. Eventually, it flies out of control and explodes in a spray of blood that covers him and everything else in the room.

"It's guaranteed that I have that same exact dream once a year," Irving says.

The first time he had this nightmare it was the night after that very first kill. Irving was a newly minted Ranger at the time, part of the 3rd Ranger Battalion out of the Army's 75th Regiment, an 18-year-old machine-gunner serving in Tikrit in 2004. He was an expert in variety of heavy guns, and that day he worked behind the iron sights of a .50-caliber. For the uninitiated, the 50-cal is designed to take down vehicles, strong enough to chew through tank armor and mangle the treads. Its effect on a flesh-and-blood human burned images into Irving's head that he'll never forget.

"He turned to jelly, mist... and just... weird looking," Irving says. "He just disintegrated, evaporated in his vehicle."



Nicholas Irving became known as The Reaper after 33 kills in a single deployment. An NBC miniseries based on his life and experiences will air later this year. With the birth of son last November, Irving says he believes the worst of his PTSD is behind him, and he has quit drinking cold turkey. Follow him on [Twitter](#) and visit his website, [hardshoot.com](#).

Over the next seven years, Irving deployed a total of six times; three as a machine gunner, three as a sniper. He killed at least another 59 men, including 33 confirmed in a single tour as a sniper. The latter figure earned him the nickname The Reaper, and in 2015 he

released a biography of the same name. The Weinstein Company is currently developing a miniseries based on Irving's experiences for NBC. It is expected to release later in 2017, and actors Sterling K. Brown, Michael B. Jordan, and Ludacris have all been considered

THE REAPER

for the lead role.

Irving will never know the actual number of enemy combatants that he killed in action, which could climb higher than 100 men. That's because he was involved in several hellacious firefights like a 2007 battle in Mosul which he refers to as "the hotel party."

"It was a multi-story hotel. It was... a hornets' nest full of bad guys," Irving says.

Irving and his teammates used every weapon system at their disposal. By the end of the firefight, the Army had dropped 500- and 1,000-pound bombs on the enemy position. Helicopters providing air support depleted all of their machine gun and rocket ammunition,

and began firing handheld weapons out of their windows. Irving emptied canister after canister of 50-cal ammunition into the building—going window-by-window in a process he likened to Whack-a-Mole. At the end of the day, every man in Irving's unit was out of ammo.

"That was a good day," Irving says.

He still talks excitedly about his exploits and compares the adrenaline rush of combat to playing in the Super Bowl. His ability to speak so openly about his experiences, and his keen recollection of specific, often gory details makes him almost as much of an anomaly in the veteran community as his

prodigious battlefield statistics.

But the price Irving paid was a high one. Besides the fact that his first ever kill comes back as an annual nightmare, the other 364 nights of the year are filled with even worse terrors. He only ever dreams of one thing—that the men he killed are coming back for him. But in his dreams, Irving's bullets are useless. The dead march straight through his line of fire and chop him to bits with hatchets, axes, or broken bottles.

"I want to say they've gotten better," Irving says. "The whole chopped up part, it cuts off once it's happening. I used to watch the whole thing happen like an out-of-body experience."



Irving and his spotter in Afghanistan. Some of Irving's kills were up to a half mile away.

THE REAPER



A final team picture before leaving Afghanistan in 2009. Irving appears bottom right. The other Rangers' faces are obscured for security reasons.

DREAMS OF BEING A SNIPER

In an ironic twist, when he was overseas—and before his body count started to climb—he would dream of home. Specifically, high school just outside of Baltimore, where he was bullied incessantly for being undersized—he's 5'7", 160 pounds at his heaviest—and for being a sincerely enthusiastic ROTC cadet.

As early as sixth grade, Irving says he dreamed of being a sniper. Both of his parents were in the Army, and Irving grew up on the grounds of Fort Meade in Maryland. His mother Angie made him

his first ghillie suit. An otherwise poor student, Irving's only A came in ROTC. He graduated with a 1.7 GPA. Nevertheless, his father Gerald always foresaw great things in his future.

"My dad kept saying, 'One day, you're going to write a book and people are going to want to read your life story.' I said, 'I have a 1.7. What the heck is he talking about?'"

Military life might have been all Irving wanted, but if you're a stickler for the rules, he should have never been accepted at all. Irving is color blind, an automatic dis-

qualifier for the infantry. He only learned this at the MEPS, or military entrance processing station, while taking a physical to get into the Navy where he planned to become a SEAL. He failed twice, but after his second try, an Army nurse overheard what his issue was, and took him aside for another try.

The nurse traced his fingers across numbers he couldn't see so he could read them out loud and pass the exam.

"I saved my medical records," Irving says. "There's a one-day gap where it's a 0 out of 14 and then 14 out of 14, flying color passed."

THE REAPER

BRINGING THE WAR HOME

To this day, when Irving wakes up in the morning, it takes a while to work the kinks out of his joints. He's perpetually sore, a side effect of parachute drops and carrying so much heavy gear over so many miles. When equipped with all of his weapons, gear, and a full complement of ammo, he tipped the scales at 315 pounds, a weight at which it was typical for him to march 15 miles or more.

It turned out that wear-and-tear were the least of his worries. The intense combat experiences and subsequent nightmares, combined with a lack of direction for a new career once he left the military in 2010, led Irving to drink heavily—a full bottle of Jack Daniels plus an almost unbelievable 20 beers per day. This crippling habit didn't just leave him blind drunk, it emptied his bank account and nearly cost him everything; his car was repossessed by creditors, his home was on the verge of foreclosure, and he was left to beg his wife and parents for money, which he also drank away.

Through all of this, Irving didn't seek help and didn't talk to his wife about the obvious underlying issues of his drinking.

In fact, throughout his military career, Irving kept his role within the Rangers a complete secret from his wife Jessica, going so far as to tell her that he didn't see combat when he deployed.

"She didn't find out until 2009," Irving says. "One of my guys slipped up. He was like, 'Dude, I heard you killed 50 guys overseas.' She was standing right next to me. She looked at me like, 'What?' We went home that night and it was weird. She said, 'I've been sleeping with a guy who's killed people...' Then she said, 'That's why you drink.' I was like, 'I guess. I'm not really sure.'"

The shame of his spiral into alcoholism nearly made him a sta-

tistic—one of the 22 veterans who commit suicide every day. It would hardly be new in Irving's circle. Thirteen men he served with chose to end their own lives.

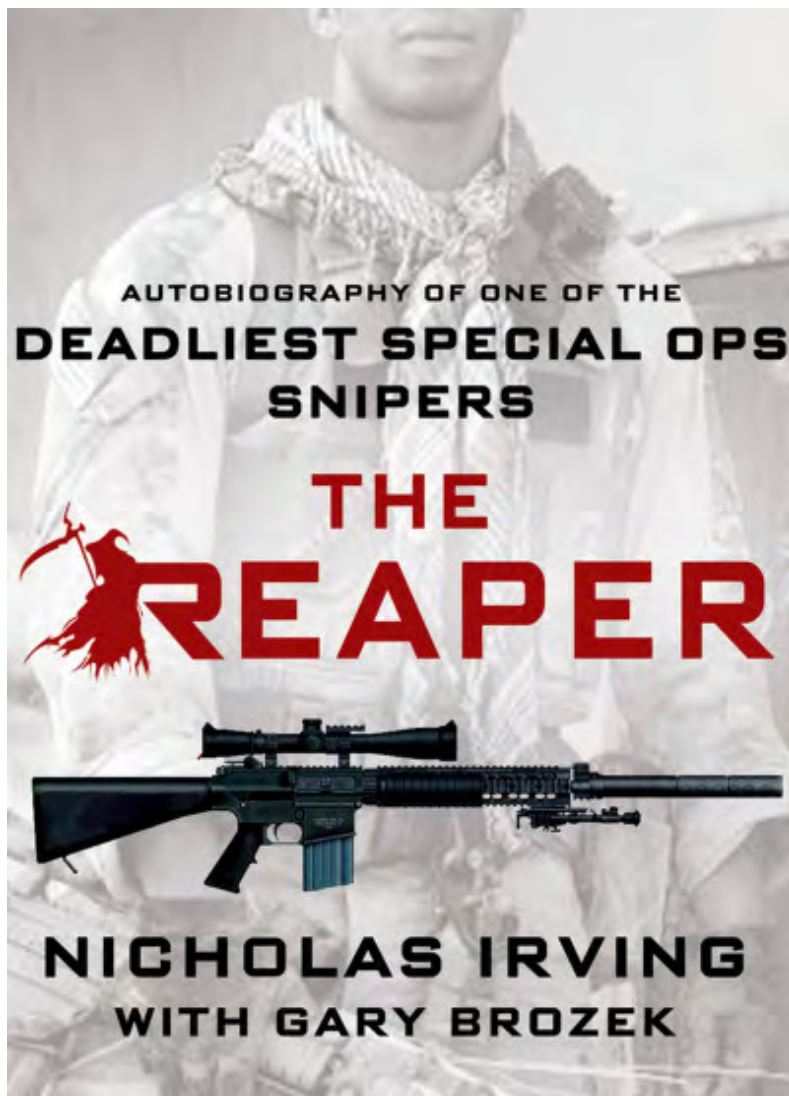
"You go from this stellar background to watching some of the missions you do on CNN to calling your parents saying, 'Hey can I borrow \$200?' It's really depressing. At that point I thought, 'I'm just a burden on people.' I contemplated suicide twice. I had one failed attempt."

On that day, Irving walked out to a secluded area behind his home, an area he chose because he thought, "It won't be too much of a mess to clean up." Then, with a round loaded



The buttstock of Irving's SR25 after a four-month deployment in Afghanistan. The 33 tally marks represent Irving's 33 kills during that time.

THE REAPER



Click [HERE](#) to read portions of Nicholas Irving's memoir and order it on Amazon.

into his favorite Glock, he put the gun to his head.

"I pulled the trigger and nothing happened," Irving said. "Nothing happened. It's a Glock so there's no safety... I walked back inside. I had to find another round. Somewhere in that thought process of looking for another round, I passed out drunk."

Irving says he can't explain what happened, but he'll happily give

credit to God. He says that of all the hundreds of thousands of rounds he's fired in his life, he had only experienced one other weapon malfunction or jam. But surviving the suicide attempt would be right in line with other inexplicable miracles he's seen on the battlefield.

"We were in this one firefight that lasted about 12 hours," Irving recalls. "Almost to a man, all of us had bullet holes in our clothes, but

we weren't hit. I saw some weird stuff that day, like a bullet entry on the front part of someone's chest and then exit wound on the back but the round never touched him. A chaplain that day had to put down his Bible and pick up a gun... I saw an RPG shot at us at a close distance and then it just bee-lined straight up to 12 o'clock and exploded instead of hitting us. I couldn't explain that, either."

Irving began to taper his drinking in 2015 and quit cold turkey on November 28, 2016—the day his first child, a son named Kayden, was born. The day also happened to be Irving's 30th birthday.

"I was sitting in a hospital for 18 hours that day. We were concerned. He had a heart condition, a murmur," Irving recalls. "All my focus was on him, making sure he was fine. I didn't care about anything else. It was the first time in a long time, many years, where I didn't crave or think about a drink. Usually, in a stressful situation like that, I would want to decompress with something, Jack Daniels or a beer, something like that, but it was the first time it never happened. I realized it's not that bad. I'll just quit it right now."

"Then when they pronounced, 'Oh, he's fine. He's good to go,' I said, 'Well, maybe that's a sign.'"

The birth of his son gave Irving hope that he thought he'd never find again. Today, he has a simple message for veterans contemplating suicide: There is light at the end of the tunnel.

THE REAPER

“Don’t be afraid to talk about anything,” Irving says. “A lot of guys think that you become less alpha, if you talk about your emotions and talk about what you feel. I think keeping it inside—it’s what I did—it gets really, really bad the longer you do it. But talking about it and not being ashamed and feeling sorry for yourself for the things that you’ve done helps a lot. I’ve forgiven myself a long time ago things that I’ve done. I do believe that everybody I killed deserved it and they were trying to do bad things to us and prevent my guys and me from going back home. I never had a regret about

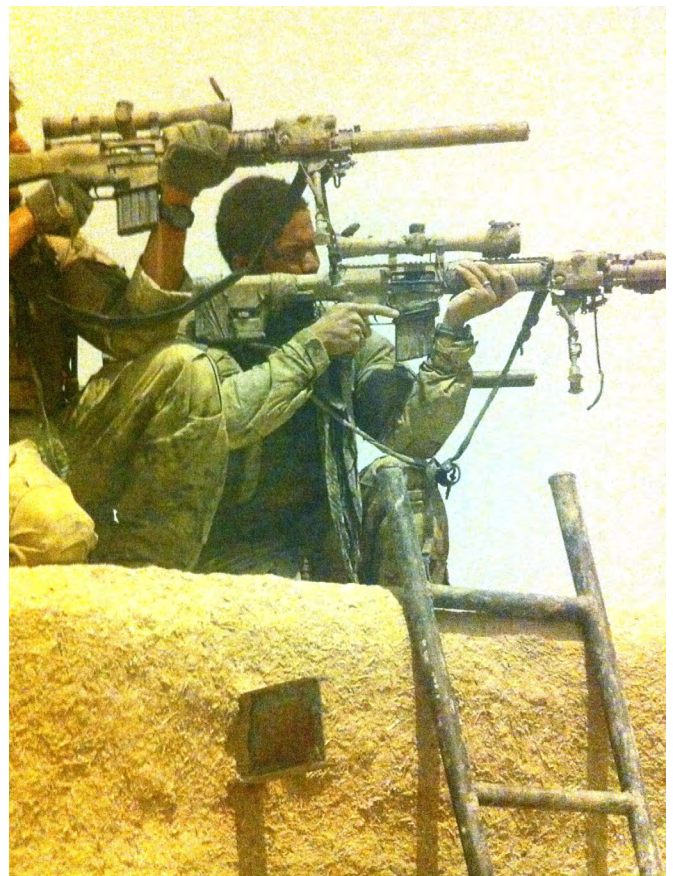
doing that.”

It should be noted, too, that Irving’s ability to talk so openly about his experiences has given him a second career as a writer. A follow-up to his first book, called *Way of the Reaper*, released later in 2015, and includes details of operations not covered in the first book. In turn, the notoriety gained from the books earned him a job as a military consultant for some movie and television projects, and in the spring of 2016 he worked onscreen alongside John Cena in the military-themed reality show *American Grit*.

“No one should be afraid to talk about what’s on their mind,” Irving

says. “Even if you think no one’s listening, I’m a big believer that someone’s always listening somewhere. When people have those Facebook rants, someone’s always listening. You’d be surprised whose life you can impact—or whose life is exactly the same as your life. You’re not alone in anything in this world.

“I thought I’m the only guy who’s losing his house, the only guy who’s losing his car, about to lose everything. You find out that no, you’re not the only guy. There’s a lot of other guys going through this, too. Keep working hard. Don’t quit. There’s always going to be light at the end of every tunnel.”



At left, Irving poses for a team picture. At right, he is shown in action, eliminating targets.

THE BEST DAMN FITNESS ADVICE, PERIOD

We polled top personalities in the fitness industry for the rules you need to follow to succeed in 2017 and beyond. These world-renown experts replied with one rule each for fitness, nutrition, and staying motivated. Their answers on the following pages provide enough inspiration and information to help you crush your New Year's Resolutions. It's time to get up and grab 2017 by the horns.



THE EXPERTS WEIGH IN

THE EXPERT: SEAN HYSON, C.S.C.S., Senior Content Strategist for Onnit.com, author of [*The Truth About Strength Training*](#)
ON THE WEB: seanhyson.com, [@seanhyson](https://twitter.com/seanhyson)

FITNESS ADVICE: Alternate upper and lower-body exercises. Pairing exercises like this in your workouts forces your heart to work harder to drive blood up and down your body. That makes you burn more calories and work more muscle mass each session. You'll get leaner faster.

NUTRITION ADVICE: Measure out your portions of protein, carbs, and fats and get a sense of how much you're already eating. That's the only way you can determine how much you should be eating to lose fat (hint: you can probably get away with consuming more than you realize). Yes, keeping

track of calories and macros can be tedious, but you don't have to do it forever. After you get a sense of what a day's worth of healthy meals looks like, you can start guesstimating your portion sizes.

MOTIVATIONAL TIP: The most important factor in achieving any goal is simply sticking to the process that gets you there, and you can't do that without a positive attitude and belief in yourself. Visualize how you want to look and perform for at least 10 minutes daily—see the images like a movie playing in your head. Write down your goal and refer back to it regularly, and count all the little “wins” that you experience daily that help get you closer. It's easy to focus on the negativity in a day, but taking stock of your accomplishments, no matter how small, bolsters your motivation and increases your confidence.



Compound moves like the deadlift, which engage every muscle in the body, are highly-efficient muscle builders and calorie burners.

THE EXPERTS WEIGH IN

THE EXPERT: STEVE COTTER,
President, International Kettlebell
Fitness Federation

ON THE WEB: ikff.net

FITNESS ADVICE: Remember that slow and steady wins the race. You're not going to get where you want in a hurry, so don't do too much too soon (or too fast, or too heavy). Consistency is your strongest ally on your path to fitness success.

NUTRITION ADVICE: Eat whole, living foods. Drink lots of water. Stay away from fake and processed foods. If it comes from a can, box, or other container, it is probably not so healthy. Eat more veggies, you can never go wrong. Remember, food is fuel, so don't put cheap fuel in your expensive car (body). Quality breeds quality!

MOTIVATIONAL TIP: There is only one of you. Be the best you that you can be and believe in your worth. No matter what anyone says, you can do it!

THE EXPERT: ALDEN RYNO,
CPPS Level 2 Strength & Conditioning Coach

ON THE WEB: PinnaclePerformancePhysiques.com [Facebook](#)

FITNESS ADVICE: Follow the 5 minute rule. There are days where we don't want to exercise at all. On those days, spend a mere five minutes warming-up or working out, and if the desire still isn't there, then all it a day. Head home and



Visualize your body as you want it to be. Imagine the comfort and confidence of being in a body that is just right. Success begins with this simple, but crucial step.

come back another day; it's better than getting burnt out too soon and hating to exercise. More often than not, you'll forget about the five minutes until half an hour later! However, this rule does require a real commitment to that first five minutes each time you intend to exercise.

NUTRITION ADVICE: Taste the rainbow. Eating vegetables, and some fruit, that display a wide range of colors is easy on the eyes and great for your body. The vibrant colors in food often represent vitamins and minerals which are essential for optimal function. And, sadly, if we don't get those essential micronutrients, then our bodies will be even more stubborn to change. Additionally, eating high-fiber vegetables first will cue our bodies to

"fill" a bit faster than normal so we are less likely to overeat.

MOTIVATIONAL TIP: You ARE capable! Throughout the day we have hundreds, perhaps thousands, of opportunities to make health choices. And those are completely up to us—no one else! Take charge of your own health and remember that you do have the choice to do better. That doesn't mean perfect, because there's no such thing. It means that you are ever capable of doing just a little bit better than your previous self each and every day. That adds up greatly over time. Whatever it is that YOU want to do with your health, you can do it. In fact, I'll even help you get there, just reach out to me at my email (algryno@gmail.com) and we'll set up a plan, specifically for you.

THE EXPERTS WEIGH IN

THE EXPERT: AMBER DAY,

Fitness Model, Trainer

ON THE WEB: AmberDayFitness.com, [Facebook](#)

FITNESS ADVICE: Write down your goals. We can't achieve our fitness goals if we don't first write them down, then we must have a plan as to how we are going to achieve those goals. When it comes to fitness, we must keep ourselves accountable in order to get results. To stay accountable, try making a vision board, finding a reliable workout partner, and write your workout in your calendar as if it were an actual appointment with someone else.

NUTRITION ADVICE: Nutrition is the most important part of the package—probably 80% of the equation. It will be important to drink a lot of water to stay energized and your metabolism revved. Plan your meals and pack for the week on Sunday, so you won't be tempted to swing through the drive-thru midweek and regret it. In addition, I always encourage people to shop on the outside isles of the grocery store first. This way it allows you to pick mostly lean meat, yogurt, fruits and veggies to fill your basket. As a rule, avoid packaged foods.

MOTIVATIONAL TIP: The num-

ber one thing that will prevent you from achieving results is your own head. The power of the mind is amazing and with positive thoughts we can control, not only our reactions outside stimuli, but also what we crave and what we eat. Feed your mind, and your body will start to follow. Stay educated about your body and nutrition. The more you know about fitness and nutrition the easier it is to make better decisions. Go out and find your WHY? As in, why are you doing it to begin with? That should be your motivation every day!

THE EXPERT: MEHMET EDIP,
fitness model, actor

ON THE WEB: MehmetEdip.com
[Twitter](#), [Facebook](#)

FITNESS ADVICE: Your workout routine should be like a working week, never take a Monday off as that starts the week off on a bad footing.

If your looking to add size why not try some German Volume Training (GVT), and put some of those Xmas calories to good use. This is a routine where you do 10 sets of 10 reps of a weight which is approx 60% below your max.

Or, if you are trying to lean out before the summer hits, why not add in some High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT), training into your workouts. This is when you give all-out, 100 percent effort for 20 seconds within your given exercise, followed by 10 seconds of rest. This



Taste the rainbow: A colorful plate doesn't just look pretty. Vibrant colors are a sign of nutrients that your body needs.

THE EXPERTS WEIGH IN



Don't try to find a partner on "your level." Find a training partner who will push you to play catch up.

method of training burns more fat as it elevates your heart rate, and HIIT isn't purely for cardio, so you can implement it into a weight circuit routine.

NUTRITION ADVICE: Try carb cycling. This is essentially when you eat more carbohydrates on some days (High Carb days) to help promote muscle growth and eating less carbohydrates on other days (Low Carb days) to help minimize fat gain and even promote fat loss. Whatever diet you try I would suggest keeping your carbs, and fats separate in any given meal to ensure your insulin levels remain level (insulin spikes are only beneficial post workout.)

MOTIVATIONAL TIP: Set short and long term goals. Just about everyone has long-term goals, but fewer people have the mini or short-term goals. They never reach the big goal because the big is nothing more than the sum of all those tiny goals.

THE EXPERT: TASHA WALL, Trainer and Fitness Model
ON THE WEB: TashaWall.com, [Twitter](https://twitter.com/TashaWall)

FITNESS ADVICE: Ease into it. No matter what your fitness level may have been in the past, if you've had significant time off, the key is to get back at things slowly so you don't overdo it and injure

yourself. Some muscle soreness is to be expected, but if you go into it slowly you can be consistent instead of having to take three days off in between sessions to recover from intense fatigue. Have realistic standards as to how you approach the gym and read your body to see how you're responding. At the end of every training session, include a full body stretch, holding each position for a minimum of 30 seconds each. This will make a noticeable difference in your muscle recovery when beginning your journey to an improved and healthier you!

NUTRITION ADVICE: Keep it clean. Outline the improvements you want to make with your food

THE EXPERTS WEIGH IN

and have a plan of what kinds of meals you would like to include in this new year. Remember that you don't need to be perfect, but you can always strive for better. Just because you get side tracked one day doesn't mean you need to throw in the towel altogether. If you don't know where to start, avoid fad diets and find a reliable source of information from a professional. You can also track what you eat with numerous free apps on your phone that will help keep you accountable and track your caloric intake, fitness, sleep levels and much more. During the first couple weeks you can expect sugar cravings if you've over indulged in them over the holidays, so do your best to push through them.

MOTIVATIONAL TIP: Don't let stress take over. It's so easy to talk yourself out of a workout when stress kicks in and you've got a million and one things on your plate. The key is to remember that when life gets stressful, you need to maintain your fitness and nutrition for your mental sanity. Sometimes you may need to do a shorter workout or possibly miss a day, but skipping the gym for a week or more is akin to putting your body last on the priority list. This causes even more stress in the end, causing you to feel bloated and disappointed. Excess fat on the body is really just a whole lot of extra stress. When you de-stress your life, you will lose the fat, and be much happier all around.

THE EXPERT: ANDY
MCDERMOTT, Trainer, Actor,



If you look into a diet plan that limits fibrous vegetables in any way, it's not the diet for you. Ideally, every meal should be paired with veggies.

Former Law Enforcement
ON THE WEB: McDermottFamilyFitness.com, [Twitter](#)

FITNESS ADVICE: Fitness is a marathon, not a sprint. No one ever “got in shape” after one torturous workout or one killer week of exercise. We need to create a habit of CONSISTENTLY doing some exercise every day- even if it’s only 10 minutes!

NUTRITION ADVICE: Habits are powerful. The secret to breaking the most stubborn of bad habits is to REPLACE them with good habits. Example: if every afternoon you have been eating a candy bar

and drinking a Coke, it's nearly impossible to quit "cold turkey." But, maybe you can substitute a healthy snack bar and some green tea. You'll satisfy the craving, and your body will feel and function much better!

MOTIVATIONAL TIP: We all need reward and encouragement. Look at your calendar and pick a day in a month or so. Plan something special: a spa day, a dinner out, a photo shoot with a friend/spouse/family member... Get creative! The idea is to have something to look forward to, when you want to look and feel your best. Once it's done, do it again!

THE EXPERTS WEIGH IN

THE EXPERT: KENNY SANTUCCI, CrossFit Coach, Competitor

ON THE WEB: KennySantucci.net
[Twitter](#)

FITNESS ADVICE: Consistency is king. Do something—anything—every day. This could be yoga, weightlifting, or old-fashioned cardio. Don't make it into a bigger deal than it really is. Just take at least 10-20 to work on your body.

NUTRITION ADVICE: One of the most shocking nutrition statistics I've ever read: The average American eats 193 sandwiches per year. That is a TON of carbs that no one needs. Deconstruct the sandwich and have a salad, or try taking off one side of the bread and eating it open faced. Any change you can make will all add up big-time over the course of a year.

MOTIVATIONAL TIP: There is always time to turn things around. It doesn't matter how old you are what you've done to get to this point. You have to get up stop feeling sorry for yourself because nobody is gonna show up at the door one day with the body you have always wanted. You have to earn it. Find a way or make a way.

THE EXPERT: HEATHER QUINLAN, Wellness coach and Bikram Yoga instructor
ON THE WEB: hquinlan.com
[Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)

FITNESS TIP: Drink plenty of water and stay hydrated even during cold winter months. We tend to think

we don't need to drink as much when it's cold out, but it's not true. And being even a little bit dehydrated will slow down your metabolism and make it harder to maintain a healthy bodyweight.

NUTRITION ADVICE: You cannot out-train a bad diet. That is a battle you will never win. Be kind to your body by feeding it good nutrient dense foods and staying hydrated with water. The results of your workouts will improve dramatically when you fuel your body properly. Exercise and diet is not a 50-50 equation. Nutrition is about 80% of the equation.

MOTIVATIONAL TIP: A goal without a plan is just a wish. Know in your heart, your mind, and your soul where you want to go in life and work towards every single day. Don't sweat the variables. Make your plan and enjoy the journey.



Fitness is more than an aesthetic. Whether or not your body impresses anyone is immaterial. What is important: a fit body is more resistant to illness, recovers faster from injury, and makes it easier to cope with the stresses of daily life.

FEEDBACK

LIVING THE FIT FUEL LIFE

One fan reaches out to say that Robert's fitness and cookbook hybrid changed his life.

Dear *RI Mag*,

I started a year ago on [FIT FUEL](#) and have lost 81 pounds. I am a chef and president of multiple brands. I am also a two-time cancer survivor. After my second cancer six years ago, I went for a well visit and my blood pressure was through the roof. My oncologist said, "You need to make a change. You beat cancer twice, but you are not immortal."

Being in the food industry it is tough. Creating menus, always traveling, always tasting to ensure everything is perfect... it's not easy to stay healthy. That's one of the reasons I have always looked up to Chef Robert, but reading his book and feeling his passion took me to the next level. After reading the book I began to diet and not lose focus. From a chef's perspective, it just made sense to me. It all came together without any stress. Thank you to Robert! He has really changed my life—and saved it, too!

Joseph R. Guli III

President, Grillsmith Restaurants

AFTER



BEFORE



ROBERT'S REPLY

Dear Joseph,

I am thrilled that Fit Fuel worked so well for you! Having read the book, you know that your story has a lot of parallels to my own. The food industry is indeed a tough place to stay fit. I traveled the world, ate a lot of great food, and had high blood pressure and cholesterol as a result. I offered myself as living proof that the concepts in Fit Fuel really work. To hear that a fellow chef was able to reverse his fortunes with the book brings a very big smile to my face. Congratulations! Stay focused and stay healthy!

Robert

KEEP IT SIMPLE

SWEAT EVERY DAY

Sweat is more than a sign of a workout done right—
it's essential for overall health.

BY HEATHER QUINLAN



Avoiding sweat has become a big market. Everything from heavy duty prescription deodorants to a process involving Botox injections into your armpits is available to stop a bodily function that can be a nuisance in social and work settings. The emergence of this market shows how far we've gotten away from what nature intended because sweating is an essential physiological function. As your body temperature rises, due to metabolism or working muscles, your nervous

system kicks into gear and gets your sweat glands working to cool your body temperature. It's a simple process and it might just hold the keys to your long-term health.

Cardiovascular activity improves heart health, increases feel good hormones, increases metabolism, and relieves stress and tension in the body. Similarly, a 15-20 minute sauna session increases your heart rate as your body heats up, your blood vessels begin to expand, allowing for more blood to occur and

ultimately improving your overall circulation by building of new capillaries so more oxygen and carbon dioxide can be delivered and removed from your muscles. Once you've accomplished that, here's the best part: you will be better able to relax. The tension in your muscles that you typically hold with stress will just melt away.

Instituting your own regular sweat therapy, in addition to regular exercise, can be as simple as going to the sauna or taking a steam

KEEP IT SIMPLE



Bikram yoga, performed in a 105 degree room at 40% humidity, guarantees that you'll be dripping with sweat. Expert Heather Quinlan says more sweat is exactly what your body needs.

bath. Better yet, you can combine your workout with your sweat therapy in a Bikram Yoga class; the temperature in the room is 105 degrees at 40% humidity, facilitating an unrivaled “flushing” effect on your system and promoting better joint mobility.

Ancient societies understood this better than we do today. Sweat rituals, or fever-inducing therapies can be dated back as far as 900 B.C. with the Mayan Sweat House. Sweat rituals can actually be found in most cultures around the world from the American Indians, to the Romans, the Russians and the Japanese. All of these rituals were created for the purpose of promoting physical and mental health, as well as promoting spirituality. Even today, in the Finnish culture, a sauna in the home is not considered a luxury but a health necessity. The Journal of the American Medical Association says that regular use of a sauna “may impart a similar stress on the cardiovascular system as running and its regular use may be as effective at burning calories.” That’s by no means a license to ditch regular exercise, but as a supplement to your regular training regimen, the use of a sauna only has upside.

But more than anything else, don’t forget how a good sweat session makes you feel—accomplished, vital, healthy, and afterward, relaxed and focused. Make it a priority to train hard and sweat every day and you’ll improve other areas of your life without even trying.

Heather Quinlan is a certified Bikram Yoga instructor and a health and wellness coach. Follow her on [Facebook](#) and contact her at: haquinlan@gmail.com

GO TIME

Doing our best to keep up with Robert.

LA FIT EXPO

If you happen to be at the LA Fit Expo on January 7th, be sure to swing by the Fit Crunch booth for some free samples and to meet Robert in person!

FRESH KITCHEN GRAND OPENING

Fresh Kitchen, the first of its kind restaurant within the Pentagon, gets a grand opening on January 10.

GOLD'S GYM LARGO

Robert has partnered on a Gold's Gym in Largo, FL, which is destined to become the training temple of the southeast U.S. The grand opening is scheduled for Saturday, January 14th. If you're in the area, come on by to work out and meet Robert!

ROBERT IRVINE LIVE

Tickets for an RI Live in Hinckley, Minnesota on May 13 go on sale on January 21, with presale tickets going up on January 18. Click [HERE](#) to buy. What is RI Live? It's not a cooking demo and it's not scripted. In short, it showcases Robert's gift for improvisation. You'll see him enter the theater with no idea of what he is about to face, and then cook his way through a series of audience-generated challenges. And if you've got a ticket, you should be prepared to get onstage yourself.



CACHE CREEK CASINO

Robert will be putting on a live cooking demonstration at Cache Creek Casino in Brooks, CA on January 28th. There will be audience participation in the show as well as a Q&A session. You can purchase tickets [HERE](#).

CINNAMON TWIST

The newest addition to Robert's line of FitCrunch protein bars is a seasonal flavor that will be gone soon! Stop into a GNC near you to grab a Cinnamon Twist FitCrunch bar while they last.

SOUTH BEACH FOOD & WINE

Robert will be doing demonstrations at the South Beach Food and Wine Festival on February 23. Events include the Art of Tiki, Kid's Kitchen, and a main stage demonstration.

INVINCIBLE SPIRIT FESTIVAL

Robert will be cooking up a feast for attendees at the Gary Sinise Foundation's Invincible Spirit Festival at Naval Medical Center San Diego on Feb. 11. Click [HERE](#) to read the story about last year's incredible event.

WORDS TO LIVE BY



“I think in terms of the day’s resolutions, not the year’s.”

— Henry Moore

“Goals are pure fantasy unless you have a specific plan to achieve them.”

— Stephen Covey

“When it is obvious that the goals cannot be reached, don’t adjust the goals, adjust the action steps.”

— Confucius