MAMA E’S
REVISITING THE TOUGHEST RESTAURANT: IMPOSSIBLE

PLAN THE PERFECT PICNIC
ROBERT’S PACKING THE BASKET - BRING YOUR APPETITE!

MILITARY FITNESS SECRETS
NAVY SEAL STEW
SMITH SHARES ELITE TECHNIQUES TO GET YOU INTO SERIOUS SHAPE

CHANGE YOUR LIFE
STRATEGIES FOR HEALTHY THINKING, MOTIVATION, AND GETTING WHAT YOU REALLY WANT
Robert Irvine Magazine
Nothing is Impossible

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VEGETARIAN PICNIC SPREAD: EGGPLANT CAPONATA
Learn how to make this savory spread in our picnic feature, starting on Pg. 23.
ROBERT’S LETTER

THE BLESSING OF BEING HUMBLED

Unexpected setbacks will happen. You can’t plan for them, but there’s an upside to each one.

A few weeks ago I was in my favorite place—the gym—doing my favorite thing—working out. All of a sudden I felt a huge pop on the back of my left arm. A visit to the doctor confirmed my worst fear: it was a full rupture of my triceps muscle.

At least I was doing something cool and impressive, right? Like bench-pressing 405 lbs or overhead pressing a circus dumbbell? Wish I could say I was. I was warming up with a 10-lb dumbbell. Chalk it up to bad luck. Or more likely the fact that 40 years of wear and tear from lifting, sports, military training, and a breakneck travel schedule came home to roost at the oddest of times.

Whatever you want to call it, it was serious. The injury required surgery to repair, but my schedule allowed for no breaks. I still had to travel and do a bunch of live shows and appearances. I had to tough it out until I was able to take a few days off and get the surgery on my calendar. After the surgery I had to cancel meetings, delay travel plans, and generally

Follow Robert on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook.
lay low while I recovered. Anyone who knows me knows that this is just about the worst thing you could do to torture me. I’m a man of action and pride, and those two things are inextricably linked. I define myself not just by what I do, but how much I can do. My triceps muscle may have ruptured, but my ego was bruised, as well.

That feeling of depression, though, quickly gave way to something else: appreciation. With the forced time off, I got to be a regular husband and dad for a few days. Instead of jet-setting off to every-which-where, I got to spend more time with Gail and my daughters. I took in a couple of movies, enjoyed a few glasses of wine and a few sunsets with the people who matter most to me. By the time I was fully recovered (I’ll still have to take it very easy on any pressing movements for a while; I can do pushups but need to wait another six weeks to start adding weight), the only thing left to do was kick myself for not taking that family break sooner.

As the summer reaches full swing, I implore you to take time for yourself. Too often we wait until we’re sick or injured to schedule time off from work and spend it with our loved ones. Life is too precious to let it all go by in a blur. My doctor says that my triceps tore because of wear-and-tear. That might be true, but I don’t believe the timing was an accident. Now I can see that it was a blessing in disguise. In no uncertain terms, my body told me to slow down and take it all in. You can do the same—and you don’t have to wait for an injury to force you.

Yours in health,

Robert's Letter

At left, Robert shows off his surgery scar. At right, getting ready for the National Memorial Day Parade, staying busy but managing to spend more time with Gail.

Robert Irvine Magazine // June 2017
When you decide to make recommendations for what to do in one of the busiest cities in the world, you don't make recommendations lightly. These picks are based on my experiences in NY. Of course I haven't been everywhere in the city—you could literally eat out every day for years and eat at a different place every time—but these are the places that all leave a lasting impression and will make you want to come back for more. Speaking of coming back for more: I'll be back to write NYC Part 2 later in the year.

HOTELS:

**JW Marriott Essex House**
160 Central Park South

Essex House is an iconic New York City landmark, retaining the vintage rooftop sign that bears its name (see below). Robert and I love this hotel not only for its luxurious rooms and stellar service but also for the convenient location. Located right across from Central Park and Columbus Circle, shopping and great restaurants—and the heart of Central Park, are just a few short steps away.

**Gansevoort Hotel Park Ave.**
420 Park Ave.

I love this hotel for the extra spacious rooms and amazing service. They have an incredible rooftop bar that offers picturesque views of the city, and the Exhale Spa where they offer the best spa services including fitness classes such as barre. This Gansevoort location is also just a short walk from Broadway, making it the place to stay if you plan on taking in a show.

The Big Apple offers endless dining and tourist attractions. So what does the world-weary traveler recommend when you're in town? These picks meet Gail's seal of approval.

Top right, the Gansevoort Park Avenue. Above, the JW Marriott Essex House.
RESTAURANTS:
Best Steakhouse: Keens
72 West 36th St.

It was tough to pick between Spark’s and Keens but I would give Keen’s a slight edge. It’s cool to walk in and see all the pipes on the walls and ceilings; this is actually the largest collection of churchwarden pipes in the entire world. It’s a tradition that dates back to the 1700s when English travelers would check their pipes in and out at their favorite inns. This restaurant has a lot of history and is well known for their mutton chops (which I’ve actually yet to try because the steaks are so good) but everything on their menu is fantastic. You will most likely leave with a doggy bag.

Best Italian: Cafe Fiorello
1900 Broadway

Located in Columbus Circle, Robert and I had one of our first dates here and it left me with the most wonderful memories of falling in love and incredible food. Everything I tried here was a delight, from the veal to the pizza.

Best Asian: Morimoto
88 10th Ave.

Did you really expect me to pick anything else? Morimoto never disappoints. EVER. The food is not only amazing but the decor is breathtaking. Sounds strange, but make sure you go and see their gorgeous restrooms. Yes. Restrooms. I would recommend any of his fish dishes from the sashimi to miso cod and especially his tableside tofu.

Other Tourist Tips:
Go see a Broadway play. I highly recommend Wicked and Book of Mormon. Even if you’re not a lover of theater, Broadway has the best shows in the world. See one and the chances are you’ll be hooked. Don’t rent a car. Take the subway. It’s a faster, cheaper, and easier way to travel. Ubers and taxis are everywhere.

Follow Gail Kim-Irvine on Twitter and Instagram.
SOMETIMES, YA GOTTA MAINTAIN

If you’re tired and achey all the time, you might be pushing too hard. Here’s the right way to back off—and get better fast.

A lot of fitness industry personalities scoff at the concept of “maintenance” and say you need to chase progress. It’s coming from a good place, but it can lead you to a bad one.

BY PAUL ROBERTS
I’ve worked in the fitness industry for a long time. First as a personal trainer, then as a writer for a few of the major fitness magazines. I’ve been to the world’s greatest gyms and picked the brains of the greatest trainers. Whatever the training modality a particular expert espoused, there was a dominant, overriding philosophy that pervaded the entire industry: Move forward. To try to maintain and stay where you are is death. Only by reaching for more of you’re your goal is: strength, speed, power, flexibility, size, etc., can you guarantee progress. In one way, it’s a practical application of the old adage, “Shoot for the moon; if you miss, you’ll still be amongst the stars.”

I always understood the heart of this concept; trainers and coaches are desperate to fight complacency in their clients. Pro athletes also need to follow this rule as an absolute. The biggest problem with “maintenance” too is that your average Jane or Joe will leap into its arms long before they’ve built up a base level of strength and conditioning that can sustain them for very long.

But for a weekend warrior to chase constant progress is a practice that is destined to meet with disappointment and/or injury. Without being able to dedicate many extra hours to proper recovery and nutrition and ensure optimal sleep every night, a constant barrage of hardcore workouts will take its toll on you. Sore muscles will cramp and seize up. Joints will start to ache and beg for rest. Cravings will run wild and send you running for a pint of Ben & Jerry’s.

So where is the happy medium? That’s the million-dollar question. A lot of people will hit the panic button and choose an easy workout (or skip one altogether) at the first sign of discomfort. This is why so many trainers err on the side of pushing their clients a little further. Answering the question ultimately boils down to being honest with yourself. If you’ve truly been pushing hard for two to three months, you’ve probably earned a week or two of maintenance. Here’s how to do it: take a few easier workouts where you cut the weight in half. Do light cardio followed by stretching. Take a yoga class, get a massage, an acupuncture treatment, or see a chiropractor.

Maintenance isn’t as sexy as trying to set personal records, but it’ll help keep you healthy, away from your doctor, and ensure your long-term progress. Go earn it with some hard work then hit the reset button. Afterward, you’ll be more excited and ready than ever to get back at it and go hard.

Proper chiropractic care, combined with other active recovery methods, will keep you in the gym long-term.
DON’T STOP MOVING

The key to burning fat? Not with maximum weight or intensity, but minimal rest. This workout keeps you moving nonstop.

DIRECTIONS: After a 5-minute general warmup, set a timer for 12 minutes. Perform all exercises in Circuit 1, resting only in the time it takes you to move from station to station, in continuous rounds until time is up. Reset the timer for 12 minutes and do the same with Circuit 2. Cool down for 5-10 minutes.

CIRCUIT 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXERCISE</th>
<th>REPS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bodyweight Squat</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overhead Press</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumbbell Row</td>
<td>10 each side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hammer Curl</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rope Pressdown</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plank</td>
<td>30 seconds</td>
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CIRCUIT 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXERCISE</th>
<th>REPS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walking Lunge</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lateral Raise</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lat Pulldown</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rope Curl</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>French Curl</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spread Eagle Situp</td>
<td>10</td>
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</tbody>
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FINISHER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REPS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Run/Jog</td>
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IN THE GYM: WORKOUT OF THE MONTH

THE EXERCISES

BODYWEIGHT SQUAT: Stand with your feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart and both hands in front of you or behind your head. Squat low to the ground, making sure your thighs get at least parallel to the floor. Engage your glutes as you stand back up.

OVERHEAD PRESS: Load a barbell at about shoulder height in a squat rack or power rack. Grab the bar with a shoulder-width grip and step back to hold the bar in the “rack” position, with the bar crossing just on top of your clavicles. Without flaring your elbows, drive the bar upward using your triceps. Lock the bar out to full extension overhead, pushing your head forward slightly when the bar is in the topmost position. Lower the bar slowly and under control to return to the rack position.

DUMBBELL ROW: Set your right knee on a bench with your left foot kicked out wide to create a stable base. Set your right hand on the bench to create a flat table with your back, and hold the dumbbell in your left hand. Row the weight to your shoulder, pulling with your back and biceps. The move is finished when you’ve rowed it to your shoulder. Pinch it there for one second, then slowly return your arm to a fully extended position. Repeat for the prescribed number of reps on your left arm, then switch and immediately do the same number of reps with your right arm.

HAMMER CURL: Hold a dumbbell in each hand and, without using any momentum, curl the weight up to chest level, stopping just shy of your shoulder. Squeeze your biceps at the peak of the movement, then slowly return to the start position. A typical hammer curl would cover a full range of motion, all the way up to the shoulder—stopping just short of that keeps tension on your biceps, giving you a better workout.

Above: a cable curl; imagine your elbows are bolted to your ribs. Below: a lat pulldown; don’t use momentum to pull the weight.
ROPE PRESSDOWN: Clip a rope attachment to a high pulley at a cable station and grip it with both hands at either end. Keeping your elbows at your sides (imagine they’re bolted to your ribs) press down, extending and contracting your triceps hard. Flare your hands out at the bottom of the movement, hold for a second, then slowly return to the start.

PLANK: Lie face-down on the floor and prop yourself up on your forearms, elbows, and toes. Brace your core and keep your body in a straight line from your ankles to your shoulders, holding for time.

WALKING LUNGE: Hold a pair of dumbbells in your hands and step forward with one foot, taking a long stride, then slowly drop your back knee to the floor. Stand back up while taking another step forward, driving through the heel of the forward foot. Continue for an equal number of reps on each leg.

LATERAL RAISE: Hold a pair of dumbbells at your sides. Keeping your elbows fully extended, lift the weights straight out to your sides, forming a T with your arms and torso. Hold the top position for one second, then slowly return to the start position.

LAT PULLDOWN: Sit facing the weight stack at a lat pulldown station, with your knees secured comfortably underneath the knee pads. Grab the bar with a wide grip, and pull the bar down with your lats, initiating the pull with your shoulder blades.

ROPE CURL: Clip a rope attachment to a cable pulley, and set the pulley on the lowest setting near the floor. Stand close to the pulley, hold both ends of the rope attachment and curl it up to your shoulders, squeezing your biceps in the top position, then slowly lowering the weight.

FRENCH CURL: Hold a single dumbbell overhead with your hands in a diamond shape supporting the underside of the top bell (the dumbbell should be vertical, perpendicular to the floor). Bend your elbows to lower the weight behind your head. Engage your triceps to press the weight back overhead.

SPREAD EAGLE SITUP: Sit on the floor and spread your legs as far as you can. Keeping your back flat, lower your torso to the floor under control. Sit all the way up, again making sure to keep your back flat. Keep your abs contracted in the top position.
GET READY FOR SUMMER

Getting lean and athletic never goes out of style.

FITBIT BLAZE

Amongst conditioning tools, weight Perfect for a Father’s Day gift or just for anyone who wants the most complete fitness wearable on the market, the FitBit Blaze does it all. Get an accurate measure of heart rate, GPS tracking to accurately measure distance travelled, plus onscreen workouts. Includes interchangeable bands; blue pictured, other colors available.

$150, fitbit.com

HARD:CORE TRAINING SYSTEM

No gimmicks here. Just the most comprehensive training system ever devised for a rock-solid, athletic midsection. Compliments of two of the brightest minds in the fitness industry, strength coaches Jim Smith and Joe DeFranco, Hard:Core explains through video tutorials and the accompanying training manual everything you could want to know about core training, and tons of ideas on how to do it right.

$127, dieselsc.com

ADIDAS NMD_XR1

The flexible outsole makes these runners fit like a sock. “Boost” cushioning gives you a proportional response for your effort; come down hard on the heel and you’ll get a powerful rebound effect. Come down softly and you get just a little. Men’s and women’s available; men’s pictured.

$150, adidas.com
FRENCH TOAST
Robert’s recipe is a tried-and-true fan favorite.

SERVES 4

YOU’LL NEED
1 tsp ground cinnamon
¼ tsp ground nutmeg
2 tbsp sugar
4 tbsp butter
4 eggs
¼ cup milk
½ tsp vanilla extract
8 slices challah, brioche, or white bread
½ cup maple syrup, warmed

OPTIONAL
1 banana, sliced
½ cup walnuts, chopped

MAKE IT
1) In a small bowl, combine, cinnamon, nutmeg, and sugar and set aside briefly.
2) In a 10-inch or 12-inch skillet, melt butter over medium heat.
3) Whisk together cinnamon mixture, eggs, milk, and vanilla and pour into a shallow container such as a pie plate.
4) Dip bread in egg mixture and then drain.
5) Grill slices until golden brown, then flip to cook the other side. Serve with syrup. Top with sliced banana and chopped walnuts if desired.

THE MACROS
CALORIES: 410
PROTEIN: 11 g
FAT: 19 g
CARBS: 45 g
CIDER BRINED FRIED CHICKEN
A tangy twist on an American classic.

SERVES 8

YOU’LL NEED
3 tbsp kosher salt, divided
3 tbsp pepper, divided
2 cups apple cider vinegar
1 cup apple juice
8 pieces chicken; legs, thighs
4 cups all-purpose flour
4 cups vegetable oil

MAKE IT
1) Mix 2 tablespoons salt, 2 tablespoons pepper, 4 cups water, vinegar, and apple juice in a 2 gallon container. Add the chicken and allow to marinate for 30 minutes up to 3 hours in the refrigerator.
2) Add the remaining 1 tablespoon salt and 1 tablespoon pepper to the flour, mix well, and hold until ready to fry.
3) In a cast iron skillet, add the oil and bring to 350 degrees F over high heat. Remove the chicken from the brine, pat dry with a paper towel, and dredge the chicken in the seasoned flour, coating well and tapping off any excess. Once all the chicken is floured, add to the oil, in batches, and cook until golden brown on both sides, 8 to 9 minutes per side. The internal temperature must be 165 degrees to be cooked thoroughly. Drain thoroughly on paper towels before serving.

THE MACROS
CALORIES: 500
PROTEIN: 18 g
FAT: 34 g
CARBS: 28 g
AFFORDABLE FINERY

Perfect fries, an elegant picnic basket, and something just for dad.

DELMUTE PICNIC BASKET

You could have bread and cheese on paper plates, or you could set an elegant table for four anywhere with this deluxe double lid picnic basket. Complete with ceramic plates, silverware, cups, and salt and pepper shakers. Presentation is key. Has Robert taught you nothing? Now turn to page 23 for his outrageously delicious picnic recipes.

$72, amazon.com

FRENCH FRY PRESS

Handheld French fry cutters work, but require a lot of elbow grease. And oh, yeah, you might lose a finger trying to jam it through a potato. This industrial strength yet affordable French fry cutter pumps out uniform 3/8” fries in record time with the help of an easy-pull level. No elbow grease required.

$32.99, webstaurantstore.com

ETCHED WHISKY TUMBLER

This Father’s Day, feed dad’s passion for history and whisky with one perfect gift, this beautiful whiskey tumbler etched in script with text from the Declaration of Independence. For an extra $0 you can pour him three fingers and then let him watch the game in peace.

$14, uncommongoods.com
FIGHTING SHAPE

Former Navy SEAL Stew Smith wrote the book on military fitness. Actually, he wrote 40 books on the topic. Here’s what you can learn from the master to get in the best shape of your life.

BY MATT TUTHILL
RI MAGAZINE: Military fitness gets a lot of attention from younger people, especially young guys, because it has a hardcore connotation to it. But for older folks or for people who have been away from the gym for a while, what can they learn from your fitness philosophy?

STEW SMITH: I first started writing about fitness when I got out of the military 20 years ago. Back then I geared everything towards the people who were looking to get into special operations programs. So it was focused on a very high level of fitness, specifically how to pass the fitness tests required in that world.

People like the fitness test idea. The popularity of military fitness started to seep into everyday training. [ED Note: As an example, CrossFit’s benchmark WODs serve as tests within that community.] People can gauge their progress with a military fitness test and see if they’re up to standard. If you’re 35 years old and you can still pass the standard to be in the Army as an 18-year-old, that’s very satisfying.

What many people don’t realize is that military fitness doesn’t require a whole lot of equipment. A lot of people get intimidated by the military-style workout, but really it’s calisthenics and running. You would add swimming if it’s a program that’s going to have you in the water like diver or Navy SEAL, things like that.

After you pass the test to get in, the next phase of military fitness is to get through the training. That requires a little more specifics to what you’re trying to do. It’s not just a general workout per se. It would have to be more specific to your goal and the training that’s in your future. Let’s say if you’re going into the Navy SEAL training, you’re going to have to run, swim, do a lot of calisthenics, lift some weights because you’re going to have boats on your head and logs on your shoulders. Those things require a certain foundation of strength. That’s on the advanced level.

Even though I don’t tend to write for the unfit, I’ve had people lose 80 to 100 pounds and go on to serve in the Army and the Army Rangers. They’ve done some phenomenal things.

I tend to focus on the high end level, however, I do have lower end level that is geared towards pure weight loss and getting in shape at the same time, using some of the same methods that the military will require of them. I have a 90-Day Beginner Fitness book. People tend to lose 40 to 50 pounds in 90 days using that program. If they have it to lose, they tend to lose it.

RI: Your workouts are based in a lot of athletic, multi-joint movements. What do you think of the old-school bodybuilding approach to things?

SS: Well, there’s nothing wrong with that. I think as we age that’s a really good approach. I just think you still need to do some movements that require multiple joints because that helps you in real life, but there’s nothing wrong with isolation to help you build up joint strength and muscle.
strength around it, while doing lower-impact cardio.

RI: You have a periodization program that’s very popular. How does it work?
SS: It enables everybody, no matter what level of fitness there is, to go through the year, and, instead of worrying about one workout of a day and repeating that one five days a week or whatever, it changes up the focus every quarter. For instance, in the spring, we are starting to run again; we do a little bit of a transition from a winter weight training program into calisthenics mixed with weights. We do some non-impact swimming or biking or something like that to balance out the cardio.

Then, in the summer it’s a little more running. This is our running cycle and calisthenics cycle typically. Then, in the fall we start with decreasing the running and decreasing the repetitions of the calisthenic and adding more weight training into it. Then, in the winter, it’s just weight training and non-impact cardio, with very little running. What this enables you to do is it enables you to get all the elements of fitness that a lot of people tend to neglect. It’s endurance, muscle stamina, strength, power, speed, and agility. All of those things are thrown into a year’s worth of training, broken up into four focus segments where you never really lose you strength but you’re not at your 100% strength year-round. And best of all it’s not boring.

RI: What is the biggest mistake that you see beginners make?
SS: The biggest mistake is they do too much too soon. They work out too hard. Let’s say they used to be an athlete in college but they let themselves go and didn’t do much for 25 years and now they’re in their mid 40s, 50 pounds overweight and they go back to the gym trying to do the stuff that they last did. Former athletes tend to mess themselves up worse than the beginners because the beginners are very cautious about it; the former athletes go into it a little too hard. In addition to training too hard, they make a ton of dietary changes simultaneously. They start drinking more water, eating clean, maybe they quit smoking—all in the same week. That’s the perfect storm for failure. If you try remove every vice in one week and replace it with a healthy habit you’ll go nuts.

What I tell people is, “Let’s start off with just moving more and drinking more water.” I’m not asking them to quit eating anything. I’m not asking them to lay off any other bad habits. Usually after a month they start seeing the results and then they start to evolve in month two where they actually have a natural inclination to eat healthier. Then they crave more exercise, too.

Most people get out of shape because they keep eating like they’re 20 years old. No one gets to be 100 pounds overweight overnight. It’s a steady gain of five pounds a year.

You can reverse that, but you need to ease into it. After three months, if you can make it that far, you’ve built...
a good 90-day habit and that tends to stick. It’s part of your life now. Then, you can start tackling any other vices you may have, if it’s extra calories at night or drinks while watching TV. All of that adds up too of course.

New Year’s resolutions, should be tackled on a monthly basis. You can give yourself one thing to do every month or try it all at once and quit by February.

RI: Part of what you have to battle as a trainer is also a number of myths perpetuated in the fitness industry. For a former Navy SEAL who advocates no shortcuts or tricks, just sustained hard work, what do you think is the most damaging fitness industry myth?

SS: I’ve never been a big fan of supplements. I’m not knocking the whole supplement industry. I take multivitamins and I will even take protein powder, but I think there are way too many supplements out there that make wild claims.

I would much rather focus on good food what I’m actually eating versus having to try to replace it with a pill or a powder. I don’t endorse any supplements. If you look on the back of some of these supplement containers, there’s a little nutrition facts label on the back. If it says nutrition facts, it’s food. If it says supplement facts, it’s not food. And if it says nutrition facts, it has to be regulated by the FDA in order to get that label. I only take protein that says nutrition facts because that ensures me there’s nothing else in it. Sometimes they have proprietary blends, which I have no idea what that means.

RI: You have a book coming out called Tactical Mobility. Mobility is something that everyone should be dedicating some time every day to, right? Especially as more and more people are spending their time at desks and on couches. But a lot of gym rats don’t even do it.

SS: Absolutely. I think every time you stand up there should be some mobility exercise you should do, even if it’s just for 30 seconds to stretch. I’m a writer, so I’ll work out in the morning for a couple of hours and then I’ll go to my desk and I sit all day. I have a standing desk now, which is very helpful, but I can’t stand all day either, so I mix it up a little bit.

I even take a mobility day every week. I train Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and by the fourth day I might be a little beat up. That’s my mobility day where I do non-impact cardio for five minutes, stretch for five minutes, and repeat that five times. It’s an hour-long work out, but I am not doing anything other than just getting my heart rate up and temperature up and stretching and rolling out any pain that I have been.

Smith says military fitness can seem a lot more intimidating than it really is. “It’s basically calisthenics and running,” he says. Follow him on Twitter, visit his website for a huge variety of free training and nutrition articles, and try his free 45-day Beginner’s Program by clicking here.
RI: When did you join the military and how long did you serve?
SS: I graduated the Naval Academy in ’91 and then I went straight to SEAL training after that. I finished SEAL training in ’92 and I got out of the military in ’99.

RI: Were you deployed a lot throughout the 90’s?
SS: Yeah, were deployed quite a bit. If it wasn’t for actual deployment like in the Mediterranean area, we were deployed doing a lot of training around the world and the United States as well.

RI: Why did you join?
SS: I always wanted to serve. I knew when I was a kid I wanted to be in the military. My grandads were in the military, it was just something that I thought was pretty cool. I always had G.I. Joe when I was a kid. It was just one of those things.

Then, I was a pretty good athlete in high school and I actually got recruited by West Point and the Naval Academy and then I was like, “Whoa, I didn’t even think about that. I could go play college sports and go join the military.” It was all working out perfect for me. It was like everything was just falling in line.

Originally, I wanted to be a pilot and then I flirted around with the Marines and then I met the Navy Seals that were stationed there and I was like, “You know what? This is really cool, I got to try this out.” It was a big challenge because I was horrible when I first started. I actually failed the fitness test when I first got there. I thought I was in shape but I was a power-lifting football player. Anything over 100 yards felt like a long distance to me. I had to evolve into a more hybrid, endurance guy. It took me about a year and a half to do, but once I did it I was on a good path to be a good student going to SEAL training and was able to get there and make it through.

RI: What are you most proud of in your military career?
SS: I would say this: I would rather go through six months of SEAL training, as hard as that is, than to go through four years of the Naval Academy again. I was a good student, but it was brutal, just four years of constant stress. Getting through the Naval Academy was by far the biggest accomplishment I ever had.

I remember being there and being very intimidated by all the valedictorians that were around me. I had a roommate that was a valedictorian that failed out and I’m like, “Oh my God, are you kidding me?”

Smith is the author of more than 40 books on military-style training. Click on any of the boxes to left and below to learn more about his books and programs.
RI: Can you talk about any of your deployments?
SS: Well, it was a different world before 9/11. It was a completely different world. We would go and deploy to the Mediterranean, and then things would pop up, the United States was involved in Bosnia, so there were times when things were busier than others, then when they weren’t busy. We were working with other countries, we were working with the Spanish and the French and the Italians just creating bilateral training with them, so it was just more of a training deployment than anything.

We were staying in nice hotels, working on the coast of the Mediterranean and now deployments are more to godforsaken places where terrorists live. It’s a completely different world. I got out in ’99, and when I was in you could spend 20 years in special operations and never see combat, it was rare.

Now after 9/11, you could spend been 20 years and you will likely never see peace. It’s a completely different animal today.

RI: Did you see combat?
SS: I did not.

RI: That’s a great blessing.
SS: I did not have to. We were there many times and almost did, but it just wasn’t part of the mission planning back then. Back when I was in, it was more eyes on a target and getting human intelligence.

RI: There are a lot of movies and shows about SEALs. Are any of them accurate?
SS: To a degree. There are some things that SEALs watch and they just cringe because that would never happen, but at the same time I think they do get across the brotherhood of the SEAL mentality, their dedication and commitment not only to each other but to really going to a place and helping out a country that can’t help themselves. It’s a unique breed. People make fun of this millennial generation, and I don’t know why because I don’t see it. I train a lot of kids that want to go serve and want to go do this and they are millennials. They’re just as brave as any greatest generation that’s out there.

I tell people all the time I see a sliver of the greatest generation every morning at six a.m. when I’m working out with these kids because they’re doing it and they’re volunteering to do it. They’re an amazing group. That’s the type of people that I’d like to see when I watch the movies. If they can get across those type of things, that makes for good SEAL movie for me. You can talk about, “Boo-hoo, they didn’t get the tactics right,” but they get the brotherhood.

“People make fun of this millennial generation, and I don’t know why because I don’t see it. I train a lot of kids that want to go serve and want to go do this – and they are millennials. They’re just as brave as any greatest generation that’s out there.”
THE PERFECT PICNIC

ROBERT’S PACKING THE BASKET. JUST BRING YOUR APPETITE.
MEAT & CHEESE SPREAD

SERVES 5

YOU’LL NEED

½ lb prosciutto
½ cantaloupe, sliced
3 oz Marcona almonds
3 oz Valdeon blue cheese
3 oz aged cheddar
3 oz dried apricots
½ baquette, fresh
3 oz honey

MAKE IT

1) Bring a small cutting board and small knife. Simply lay out meats and cheese on you cutting board.
2) Combine bread with honey, cheese, and prosciutto, or use slices of prosciutto to wrap almonds, cheese and apricots.

THE MACROS

CALORIES: 506
PROTEIN: 29 g
FAT: 21 g
CARBS: 55 g
THE PERFECT PICNIC

PEEL ’N EAT SHRIMP

SERVES 2

YOU’LL NEED
1 lb gulf shrimp (16-20), shell on
1 lemon, cut in half
1 carrot, chopped
1 onion, chopped
3 ribs celery, chopped
1 tbsp Old Bay Seasoning
4 bay leaves
2 qts water
16 oz white wine
1 cup cocktail sauce
1 cup tartar sauce

MAKE IT
1) In a large pot over high heat, add lemon, carrots, onion, celery, white wine and old bay. Bring to a boil.
2) Add whole and unpeeled shrimp. Cook in boiling liquid for approximately 4 minutes.
3) Strain shrimp from liquid and place on sheet tray and allow to chill in refrigerator.
4) Serve chilled; pack in ice if bringing on a picnic.

THE MACROS
CALORIES: 277
PROTEIN: 41 g
FAT: 3 g
CARBS: 19 g
THE PERFECT PICNIC

EGGPLANT CAPONATA

SERVES 5

YOU’LL NEED
½ cup extra virgin olive oil
1 large Spanish white onion
2 tbsp pine nuts
3 tbsp golden raisins
5 cups eggplant, cut into 1 inch cubes
1 tbsp sugar
1 tbsp thyme picked and chopped
1 cup tomato sauce
1 cup sherry vinegar
1 tbsp mint chopped

MAKE IT
1) In large sauté pan, add onions, pine nuts, and golden raisins. Cook for approximately 3 minutes over medium heat.
2) Add eggplant and continue to cook for approximately 5 to 8 more minutes, allowing eggplant to get some color.
3) Add thyme, tomato sauce, sugar, and vinegar.
4) Bring to a boil and season with salt and pepper. Allow to chill and serve at room temperature.

THE MACROS
CALORIES: 364
PROTEIN: 3 g
FAT: 25 g
CARBS: 35 g
POMEGRANATE ICED TEA

SERVES 8

YOU’LL NEED
Juice of 2 lemons
Juice of 2 limes
2 tbsp brown sugar
Sprigs of fresh mint, for muddle and garnish
8 cups sweet tea
4 cups pomegranate juice
1 cup cranberry juice
Ice, for glasses

MAKE IT
1) In a mixing bowl, crush or muddle the lemon and lime juices with the brown sugar, blending the juices and sugar together.
2) Next, thin slice a few mint leaves and add to the juices. Then add the sweet tea, pomegranate juice and cranberry juice and mix well.
3) After mixing, serve over ice and garnish with fresh mint or sliced fruit.

THE MACROS
CALORIES: 107
 PROTEIN: 0 g
 FAT: 0 g
 CARBS: 27 g
What was arguably Robert’s greatest Restaurant: Impossible challenge nearly didn’t get off the ground. But after two days of drama, Mama E’s Soul Food in Oklahoma City had a beautiful renovation and a reversal of fortune. Five years later, we caught up with the owners, who are doing well—and enjoying a new and unexpected bonus of appearing on the show.

BY MATT TUTHILL
In the annals of Food Network programming, Mama E’s holds a special distinction: it is the only restaurant visited by both Guy Fieri on Diners, Drive-Ins, and Dives and Robert Irvine on Restaurant: Impossible. When Guy visited the Oklahoma soul food eatery in 2009, he fawned over owner and head chef Keith Patterson’s cooking. With his mouth full and eyes rolling in delight, Guy gave a ringing endorsement of everything Keith cooked, especially the signature dish: fried chicken wings over a Belgian waffle doused in butter, powdered sugar, hot sauce, and maple syrup. Guy looked at Keith, who is also a pastor at the church across the street, and said a solemn, “Amen.”

The experience of appearing on Triple-D had an immediate impact, with folks flocking from all parts of the country to get a taste of what they’d seen on TV. “Business was booming after that,” says Keith’s wife and co-owner, Stephanie.

So what happened? According to Keith, he was encouraged by the success and expanded his business—a little too big and a little too fast. Balancing the workload at an expanding restaurant with his duties as pastor across the street and as the executive chef at a country club proved to be too much.

When Robert arrived five years later in 2014 he found that the newly-expanded restaurant had fallen into disrepair. If the cracked tiles, sticky floors, and bug-ridden didn’t kill customers’ appetites, the salon chair in the corner of the restaurant—which Stephanie had added to pursue a side business—finished the job.

Robert is always to the point, but his arrival at Mama E’s was especially blunt. “Keith, Stephanie! Come in this pig sty you call a restaurant,” he yelled.
Robert called the state of Mama E’s a disgusting embarrassment, which sent Keith storming off the set and demanding to end the show.

“I don’t care who you are, you won’t disrespect me,” Keith said at the time. “They can get their cameras and go on down the road because I won’t do it.”

Friends and co-workers coaxed Keith to get on with the show, but it set Tom Bury and the construction crew behind schedule. It also wasn’t the last dramatic outburst. While Robert counseled Keith and Stephanie on their marriage, he asked them why they got married. When Keith replied “because I loved her”—in the past tense—it sent Stephanie storming off the set.

“This can be the one that I can’t fix, period,” Robert said.

Eventually, Robert got the show back on track and got the two to sit down and talk about their marriage. They revealed that over 18 years of marriage, 17 had been blissful, but the last year had been a disaster under financial strain.

Robert also learned that they both possessed extraordinary singing talent, and sent the two off to a recording studio while the crew worked on renovations.

The scene that followed in the recording studio was an emotional tour de force, with Keith and Stephanie belting out love ballads and church hymns and shaking with tears of joy at the end, all while a beaming Robert looked on.

“You complement each other so much,” Robert said. “The harmony when you sing is the harmony you
need in life… If you can figure this out, the restaurant is the easy part.”

Back at the restaurant, Robert taught Keith some basic portion control and inventory skills to increase profits, and food prep tricks to save time. Robert offered little in the way of tweaking the menu as Keith’s food wasn’t the problem. One tweak Robert offered—apple cider vinegar in the collard greens—was abandoned quickly after customers demanded the old “juice” back.

“They called it liquid crack,” Keith says with a laugh.

In the month following the renovations and unveiling, revenue doubled and Keith was able to quit his second job at the country club. Five years later, the boom has calmed down as expected, but Mama E’s consistently pulls 15% more business than before Robert showed up.

“I can’t believe that I was telling Robert to leave,” Keith said. “There are not many people who care about people anymore, but this man poured out of himself. He checked me, told me where I was at, where I lacked, and the truth hurt, but thank God for Robert because no one has every really cared for me like this.”

What’s more, showcasing their singing ability on the show had an unexpected benefit. They started showing up to hear more at Keith’s church.

“We have probably 20 more people who come to church every week,” Keith says. “We always had people go from the church to the restaurant. We never had it go the other way.”

Keith says that he and Stephanie are currently working on an album together and will update RI Magazine when it’s available for purchase. In the meantime, he says he looks back at his time on Restaurant: Impossible as a resoundingly positive experience. But there is one thing he would change if he could go back.

“I wouldn’t argue with him this time,” Keith says. “I’m in here and watching the restaurant grow and all the credit goes to Restaurant: Impossible. I thank God for Robert.”
Hello Robert,
I would love for you to help me to lose some weight. I have been overweight my entire life and I really need a positive change. I believe you are the best person I can count on. I currently weigh 349 pounds. I'm 25 years old and a single mother. I just ended a six year relationship in November with the father of my daughter. I was the victim of domestic violence and had to choose between the father of my daughter or my daughter. I chose my daughter, who is my world, my everything.
I have gained 70 pounds in the past six months and I fear I am just going to end up putting on more and more weight. I want to be able to take my daughter to the park, run around with her without getting overwhelmed and having to stop to catch my breath every five seconds. I want to be able to take my daughter to the fair and not be afraid that I won't fit on the rides.
I want to go to school to be someone my daughter will be proud of. For that I would need my full attention on my class assignments and not be afraid of not fitting in the desks.
My biggest fear of all is that I don't want my daughter to pick up my bad eating habits. I don't want her to be obese and I absolutely don't want her to go through the bullying I had to experience growing up. This world can be really cruel, especially when you don't meet society's standards.
Please, Robert, give me some advice. Anything is appreciated. God bless you and your family and staff.
Sincerely,
Samantha K.
Dear Samantha,

I am very sorry to hear about the hard times you find yourself in right now. When you’re in a tough spot and fighting all alone, I know that it can feel hopeless. I assure you it is not.

The circumstances you describe are tough ones. But did you realize that you wrote the solution to your own problem right at the top of your e-mail? When you faced bad circumstances last year in an abusive relationship, what did you do? You created new circumstances. You left. You went out on your own. You excised the cancer from your life and struck out in search of a brighter tomorrow with your child.

In the meantime, it sounds like stress and some poor choices have piled up and you’ve gained weight.

It is once again time for you to do what all strong women do, what all strong people do, when they face bad circumstances. They create new circumstances. But before you can start to think one iota about diet or exercise, you must change your mindset. You must believe it is possible to reach a healthy weight, to feel good in your clothes, to be confident, to be a positive role model for your daughter in every sense. Imagine yourself as you want yourself to be, surround yourself with people who support that vision, and then relentlessly chase that vision of yourself.

You can do this, Samantha. To my eyes, you already did the hard part. A lot of people will stay in a bad relationship out of fear of the unknown. So right off the bat, you are stronger than most people. Now finish the job and take control of your health. My beginner training plan is attached. (Editor’s Note: It is the beginner’s program prescribed in Robert’s book *Fit Fuel.*) Please refer to this to get started, then after a few weeks, up the ante and continue to push yourself. Some suggestions for how to do this are included in the text.

My free digital magazine also has workouts and healthy recipes every month. Download the May issue today (there are a few great juice recipes in there that I think you’ll love.) Beyond that, it is probably a good idea to seek the advice of a nutritionist or dietician and personal trainer to get the dedicated, personalized attention you require.

Fitness and health are not end goals, but a way of life. Say hello to your new life, Samantha. I am rooting for you every step of the way.

Yours in health,

Robert
Have you ever thought of picking up and moving to a different state or maybe even a different country? Have you ever thought about changing careers or doing something that would completely change your life? Has fear ever stopped you from doing any of those things? I know it has stopped me dead in my tracks many times, but in 2012 at the age of 35, it was different. I decided to start living my dreams and go after my passion in life.

After being a committed Bikram Yoga student for 10 years, I took a hiatus from my nine-to-five to fly out to LA for nine weeks and become a certified instructor. Alone on a plane, flying across the country with really no idea what to expect, having just walked away from everything I knew—it was scary to say the least. I knew I wasn’t making a reckless choice that put me in danger but my brain was perceiving it as just that. In the 10 years leading up to that moment, I had so much inner dialogue with myself about why I shouldn’t do it: It’s expensive. I can’t take 9 weeks off from work. I’m not a great teacher and I am certainly not a public speaker. The list was endless and I took each excuse as Gospel. But a nagging intuitive feeling wouldn’t go away and finally...
took over.

There’s a great TED Talk by retired Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield in which he talks about fear. In a nutshell, Chris talks about all the very real and life-threatening things that could go wrong in space, including the descent back to Earth where incineration is a legitimate possibility. That is real danger. To Chris and his team, who had prepared for it for years, it didn’t feel that way. He explains that action and preparation help eliminate fear and allow you to go places and see things you never thought possible. That is 100% applicable to your life and it’s exactly what I did.

My little adventure didn’t end with the nine-week teacher training. The preparations I made over that time allowed me to really rip the Band-Aid off when I got back home. I put all my belongings in storage, bought a ticket to Tasmania, Australia, and embarked on a mini-retirement to teach yoga. Don’t get me wrong; there was still some fear of the unknown, but had I not taken that leap of faith, I would have denied myself so many amazing experiences over the last five years. That one choice has taken me multiple times to Thailand, Cambodia, New Zealand, Australia, and Mexico. All of it has been filled with experiences and people so brilliant, no amount of financial security or safety net—the things I clung to in the past—could ever replace it.

What’s the little voice inside you that keeps nagging you? Is it begging you to conquer your fears and make a big change? What’s that one thing that, if you achieved it, would make you look back in utter amazement, as an astronaut would seeing Earth for the first time from outer space?

Take charge of your life. Fear is a choice and can be conquered with action. Never lose sight of what you know is true in your heart.

Heather Quinlan is a certified Bikram Yoga instructor and health coach. Visit her website at: hquinaln.com and like her page on Facebook.

If you could see the world the way astronaut Chris Hadfield did, you could vanquish your fears from the ultimate cosmic perspective.
BODYBUILDING.COM VIDEO SERIES
Robert’s video series on Bodybuilding.com continues. Try clean eating Robert’s way and you’re going to enjoy healthy cooking a whole lot more. Click the photo to the right to watch the second video, this one covering steak three ways (chicken and oatmeal have also been covered). Future videos in the series will cover veggies, rice, and dessert.

CATERAN YOMP
Robert will be marching 22 miles in the Cateran Yomp in Scotland on June 10. The Yomp is a charity march that raises funds for British army veterans in need.

TROPICANA COOKOUT
Fans eagerly awaiting the grand opening of Robert Irvine’s Public House in Las Vegas can get a sneak peak on June 16 when Robert hosts the Summer Cookout with Friends at the Tropicana. This evening poolside event will feature classic barbecue dishes from restaurants up and down the strip, including the Public House, whose grand opening will take place in late July.

SIGNATURE SIDEKICKS
Robert’s Signature Sidekicks have relaunched in new clamshell packaging and are now available in Wal-Marts everywhere.

FITCRUNCH BROWNIES
Robert’s continually expanding line of protein bars recently added a new product, microwaveable protein brownies. Following the high standard set by FitCrunch bars, the brownies are made with high quality whey protein, and can be eaten hot or cold. Each one packs 15 grams of protein, and are available in two flavors, chocolate or cookie dough. You can purchase them at Sam’s Clubs and online through Amazon.

HEATING UP
Summer’s in full swing. So is Robert’s schedule.

TAPS GALA
On Saturday, May 27th, Robert will be in attendance and help design the menu for the TAPs 23rd Annual National Military Survivor Seminar Grand Banquet in Arlington, VA. It’s a tremendously positive event that helps grieving families. About 850 people will be in attendance.
WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU DID SOMETHING FOR THE FIRST TIME?