



Fit *at* Any Age

Despite what industry slogans and #fitspo memes tell you, your body isn't a machine. How it works, feels and looks will change as you grow older. Over the next 14 pages, we present every tool you'll need to work *with* your physique rather than against it, as well as strategies to keep you both mentally and financially at top speed. The rest of your life starts here

Your Twenties

20s
YOUR
DECADE TO
SMASH IT

You've got it good. Right now, you have a youthful (read: fast) metabolism, boundless energy and the ability to shrug off a hangover on your side. With a little extra help, however, you can keep the good times rolling without racking up a debt that your body won't be able to repay later on in life



THE NUMBERS

How do your metrics stack up against the regular man in his twenties?

BMI	RESTING HEART RATE	DAILY STEPS	DAILY ACTIVE MINUTES	HOURS OF SLEEP
25.7	62BPM	9,903	60	6HR 35MIN

What You Can (and Can't) Get Away With

You're not invulnerable. But during this decade, you may be more resilient than you think

Routinely Drinking to Oblivion 	 A Chronic Weed Habit	Out-Training a Bad Diet 	 Avoiding the Dentist	 Those Two (Three?) Times You Did Ecstasy	"Borrowing" the Odd Cigarette 	 An Erratic Sleep Schedule
<p>As your brain isn't fully developed until your mid- to late twenties, the potential for harm is significant, says neurologist Dr Frances E Jensen. With vast numbers of connections forming between your neurons, habits form easily, while binge-drinking can affect the development of brain regions involved in memory and attention. You might cheat the hangovers, but you can't cheat time.</p>	<p>CBD oil may be trending, but don't mistake that for a green light to get stoned. In your first decades, the connections in your brain are gradually being wrapped in a form of insulation called myelin, with the frontal lobe, linked to decision-making, the last area to complete this process. Daily cannabis use can disrupt this, with ramifications for your cognition. Make smart choices now, so your future self is capable of doing the same.</p>	<p>Living off the saver menu isn't a routine you want to get into, no matter what your BMI may be. A poor lifestyle can lead to "invisible" yet enormously harmful fat storage around your major organs. However, the high muscle mass and metabolic flexibility (the ability to adapt to different diets) of men in their twenties make a biweekly post-gym burger a permissible indulgence. So, grab some napkins.</p>	<p>"The twenties are the worst decade for oral health in males," says Dr Mark Wolff. Neglecting to book in dental appointments now (coupled with frequent nights of crashing out before brushing) can prove a painful and potentially expensive mistake. Tooth decay can be permanent, but it's also preventable. Book yourself in for a comprehensive clean-up now and you should be OK, limiting future check-ups to once every couple of years, says Wolff.</p>	<p>"We don't have evidence of long-term brain damage from intermittent use," says Dr Wilson Compton of the National Institute on Drug Abuse. "I wouldn't expect someone who had no complications at the time to have problems 10 years later." Long-term use, however, carries bigger risks. Drop it regularly and ecstasy can harm the brain regions involved in memory formation. Not something to dance about.</p>	<p>While we aren't offering you <i>carte blanche</i>, a study of former smokers in the <i>New England Journal of Medicine</i> found that those who quit between the ages of 25 and 34 had a life expectancy equal to that of non-smokers. But you're gambling with your health: after all, cigarettes are known to be moreish, and if you carry that "only on weekends" habit into later life, your risk of heart complications won't be too different to that of a daily smoker.</p>	<p>"We tend to get more deep sleep when we are younger," says MH sleep adviser Dr W Christopher Winter. In other words, the sleep you get will likely counterbalance any mid-week Netflix binges, as long as you aim for seven hours per night on average. This ability quickly diminishes as you age, when consistency becomes key. You can't bank sleep for your thirties, so enjoy yourself now.</p>

FINANCIALLY FIT AT 20

So you're trying to get a foothold on the bottom rung of the ladder, while revelling in your freedom when you're able to: good for you. But a little financial forethought will serve you well, says Laura Whateley, author of *Money: A User's Guide*



CHECK YOUR CREDIT

There is a common myth that you have one credit score. In reality, every financial company that you might want to borrow from has its own mysterious, bespoke way of assessing whether or not you are reliable enough to lend to. You do have a credit history, though, and lenders will look at that, so you should check what shape it is in and correct any mistakes early, via experian.co.uk or noddle.co.uk.

SAVE SMARTER

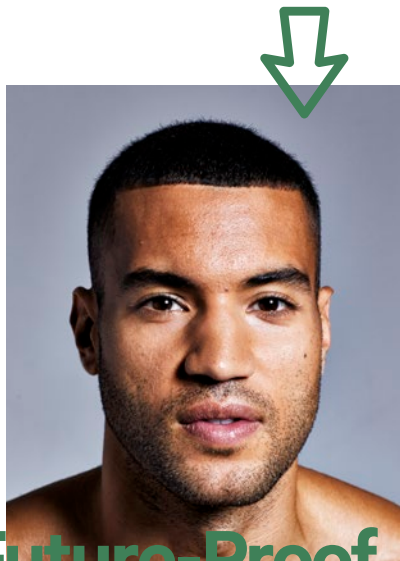
You should have at least three months' worth of essential outgoings – for example, rent, food and bills – in an easy-access savings account, in case you are made redundant or fall ill. (Debt charities advise aiming for at least £1,000.) This may seem a tough ask, but start saving small and automatically using an app such as Cleo or Plum, and the magic of compounding will slowly build you a reliable rainy-day fund. Learn to save now, and it may save you in future.

GET OUT OF DEBT

There is little point in saving, however, if you are barely chipping away at debts that charge interest rates 20 times higher than savings accounts. This applies to credit cards, payday loans and bank loans, though not student loans. Never just clear the minimum payment on a credit card – research by TotallyMoney shows that if you were to do so on a £5,000 debt, you'd typically pay as much as £4,954 in interest.

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Future-Proof Your Face

Make the effort now to ensure your skin can go the distance

Even if you're still getting ID-ed at the Dog and Duck, this isn't the time to abandon all caution. "The most important thing you should be doing during your twenties is protecting yourself from the sun," says dermatologist Dr Joshua Zeichner. Any sun damage that occurs now risks weakening the foundations of your skin. Fortunately, many of the new daily-use sunscreens (such as Kiehl's Ultra Light Daily UV Defence SPF50) are lightweight and invisible, so you won't feel like you're hitting the beach on the way to work. Wash your face twice a day, too. Use a cleanser that contains salicylic acid, such as Clean & Clear Advantage Acne Control 3-in-1, which will minimise your chances of scar-causing breakouts.

THE NUTRIENT YOU NEED NOW VITAMIN D

"When you're in your twenties, your body can still lay down the foundations for strong bones that will sustain you through life," says nutrition consultant Dr Mike Roussell. Vitamin D plays a key role in this, as well as in muscle function, so now is the time to prioritise your intake. Aim for 600IU per day, either from food (140g of cooked wild or sockeye salmon will meet your target) or by taking a supplement. A trip to Ibiza is also effective.

Eat more: Salmon, mackerel, sardines, egg yolks, liver, Swiss cheese



CONSULT THE SCIENCE
TO LIFT YOURSELF TO
PEAK PERFORMANCE



YOUR NEW FOOD RULES

By Matt Carlin, nutrition consultant at Life Time

Double Down on Calories

If you're training regularly but still not getting the results you want, you're probably not eating enough. To pack on weight, you need to be in a calorie excess. This could mean consuming closer to 3,500kcal per day, which is 1,000kcal more than the recommended intake. In this instance, hunger is not always a good guide. Though you might normally have no appetite in the mornings, get into the habit of eating breakfast if you want to build and maintain muscle.

Portion Out Your Protein

Bulking up requires a whole lot of chewing. Carlin advises eating six meals per day, each containing 30g of protein, which will do a lot more for your developing muscles than scoring your RDA from one supersize, protein-stuffed dinner. If you struggle to eat so regularly, shakes can help you hit your targets. Check out our guide to the best in sports nutrition on page 91 if you're unsure where to start.

Make Meal Prep a Habit

For weight-gain diets to thrive, you need structure in your life. Try this schedule that Carlin developed for busy younger men: shop on Tuesday, then prep four meals that evening for the week's lunches and dinners. Shop again on Saturday and prep three more lunches and dinners that night to take you back to Tuesday. Stock your desk drawers with protein- and calorie-rich snacks such as jerky, almonds and low-sugar bars. You'll never be caught short again.



YOUR NEW FITNESS RULES

By Jaxon Knighton, personal trainer at Life Time health clubs in the US

Don't Work in Isolation

Targeting the muscles you want to develop with exercises such as biceps curls or triceps extensions may seem a short cut to growth, but you'll miss out on the hormonal hit that only full-body workouts deliver. Instead, Knighton advocates compound moves such as bench presses and rows. "They'll build a foundation for strength," he says.

Drop the Weights (Sometimes)

While barbell workouts will spike your testosterone, Knighton advises you to schedule in one bodyweight session per week. If you're just getting started, press-ups and pull-ups should be the backbone of your routine. Not only will they reduce your risk of injury compared to training with heavy weights, but they will improve your "body awareness" – your mind/muscle connection. This will form good habits for your heavy lifts.

Every Day Is Core Day

Don't devote whole sessions to your six-pack. Incorporate your core work into everything you do by adding moves that challenge your balance and recruit your abs, lower back and glutes for stability. Sit-ups are out. Abs wheel roll-outs, Pallof presses and TRX pikes will deliver more burn for your buck, so tag these onto the end of your lifting sessions.

PHOTOGRAPHY: ALLIE HOLLOWAY, ISM, DAN MATTHEWS, MICHAEL HEDGE, GETTY IMAGES

Bounce Back from Your First Big Injury

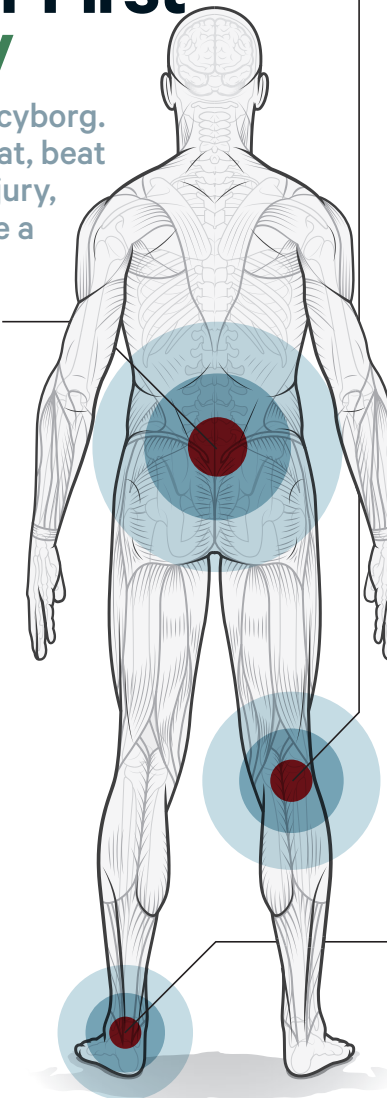
You're not a fitness cyborg. Use our guide to treat, beat and manage your injury, so it doesn't become a lifelong annoyance

THE DANGER ZONE Lower Back THE INJURY Muscle Spasm

"Lifting weights with poor form can trigger spasms in the muscles that extend up and down your back," says sports physician Dr Ryan J Linger.

Treat It: Both heat and ice can help. "Go with whichever feels better to you," Dr Linger advises. Over-the-counter anti-inflammatories such as ibuprofen also offer temporary pain relief. Resist the (pretty understandable) temptation to stay put – light stretching or even taking a short walk can help to stop the affected muscles from continuing to spasm. Get yourself moving.

The Long-Term Fix: Sort out your form. Build core strength with rotational movements – chops, say – and do a deep abs-strengthener, such as front and side planks.



THE DANGER ZONE Knees THE INJURY ACL Tear

Often caused by sudden changes in direction – in diving, for example – this most frequently occurs when there's an uneven strength relationship between your quads and hamstrings, says John Gallucci of Jag-One Physical Therapy.

Treat It: Ice it, rest and stretch your quads (with your heel to your glutes). Partial tears can heal with physical therapy. A tear of more than 35-45% may require surgery.

The Long-Term Fix: Strengthen your quads and hamstrings with walking lunges and step-ups. Keep your knee tracking between the second and third toes.

THE DANGER ZONE Ankle THE INJURY Sprain

The ligaments supporting your ankle can overstretch and tear, resulting in bruising and swelling. The more often it happens, the more susceptible you'll be.

Treat It: Though a sprain may seem like no big deal, it can limit you for life if you push through it. In the first 48 hours, use the "Rice" method: rest, ice, compression, elevation. Then perform range-of-motion exercises, like ankle circles.

The Long-Term Fix: Train your ankle to cope under stress with balancing moves (single-leg squats, say) and agility exercises such as running in progressively smaller figure of eights.

THE CHECK-UP

Bite the bullet and make an appointment to be screened for STIs, regardless of how cautious you've been. "Men can access free testing on the NHS at their local sexual health clinic, but many areas also offer home testing, too," says Sophie Jones of Sexual Health London. She recommends that sexually active men in their twenties routinely be tested for chlamydia, gonorrhoea, HIV and syphilis. "Men who have sex with men, or those who have sex with partners from high-prevalence countries, should also consider being checked for hepatitis B and C." Get retested with every new partner, or once every three months. Peace of mind is well worth any awkwardness, after all.

MEN KILLING IT IN THEIR TWENTIES



Nick D'Aloisio
Self-made tech millionaire

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Adam Peaty
Record-breaking swimmer

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Max Whitlock
Medal-hoarding gymnast

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John Boyega
Actor and MH cover star

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Anthony Joshua
World heavyweight champion

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Your Thirties

30s
OPTIMISE
YOUR
PRIME

So, your hair is a little thinner and you're getting a little less sleep. But arm yourself with some essential skills as you begin life as an adult proper, and the stage will be set for your best decade yet



PHOTOGRAPHY: RAMONA ROSALES | GROOMING: ELOISE CHEUNG | FASHION STYLING: RYAN YOUNG | CASTING: IMPOSSIBLE CASTING
CLOTHES: JOCKEY | ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY: TAVIS COBBURN, LOUISA PARRY, JOBE LAWRENSEN

THE NUMBERS

How do your metrics stack up against the regular man in his thirties?

BMI

27

RESTING HEART RATE

63BPM

DAILY STEPS

10,006

DAILY ACTIVE MINUTES

60

HOURS OF SLEEP

6HR 26MIN

FINANCIALLY FIT

AT 30

You're on your way (hopefully) to paying off those loans and (maybe) buying property and having kids. Invest wisely and you won't feel the hit quite so hard, says financial journalist Whateley



SAVE FOR A DEPOSIT

If you want to escape tenant life and become a homeowner, put your savings in a Help to Buy Isa or Lifetime Isa, available to anyone under the age of 39. Both offer a valuable 25% top-up of your savings from the government, as much as £1,000 a year. Keep in mind that you'll get a much better mortgage rate with a 10% deposit than a 5% one. It's worth rustling up the extra now.

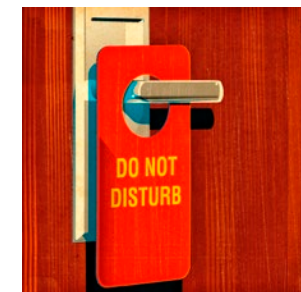
START INVESTING

If you've already built up a rainy-day fund in your account, start putting a bit extra into stocks and shares. Cash savings are diminished by inflation, and most experts agree that you're more likely to beat inflation by putting your money in the markets. As a general rule, invest for as long as possible – be prepared to lock your money away for at least five years, though ideally 10 or more. This is about the long haul.

GET HELP WITH THE KIDS

If you plan to start a family at some point in your thirties, be sure to take advantage of the free cash schemes offered by the government that can be put towards childcare. Far too few parents know about them. You can find more information at childcarechoices.gov.uk. You'll receive £2 for every £8 you pay in, up to a value of £2,000 per child each year.

I used to take pride in how well I slept. I'd scoff at the 36% of men who clock less than seven hours of sleep a night. Who are these people who "can't sleep"? I know now that they are mums and dads – like my wife, Meghan, and I, who spent months after the birth of our first child waking up every two hours to address his wails. During this time warp, I called up Men's Health's sleep adviser Chris Winter, the author of *The Sleep Solution* and a father himself. "Most new parents don't expect how much sleep they lose, not only when they're trying to get the baby back to sleep, but also



How to Sleep Like Your Baby

People keep telling you that time goes by so fast when you have a newborn. Not at 2am on a Tuesday, it bloody doesn't

when they are trying to get themselves back to sleep," Dr Winter says. "It's usually because there's no plan. I call this 'guerrilla sleep.'" Rather than attempting to tackle the situation bleary-eyed and unprepared, Dr Winter suggests dividing and conquering. "Agree upon 'on' and 'off' shifts, ideally of about seven hours every other night," he says. The "on" shifter stays in a spare room, apart from the "off" shifter, who is only to be woken up in case of emergency.

My son sleeps much better now, though there are still

nights of terror. But something deep within me has shifted. I no longer take as much pride in my own sleep as I do in my child's. Don't tell Meghan, but most nights I don't even mind a teething-induced caterwaul at 2am. I can swoop in, scoop up my child and soothe him until he rests his tiny cheek against my chest.

As I try to return to sleep, I implement one of Dr Winter's strategies: meditating on something calming. He suggests mentally mapping out some relaxing weekend activities, but I often think of my son, dreaming his dreams, and hope that I'm a part of them.

By Paul Kita



Whatever You Do, Don't Panic

Up to a third of men will suffer from an anxiety disorder or panic attacks in their lifetime. But as real-life responsibilities truly start to bite in your thirties, you're more vulnerable than ever. Use our timeline to survive any breakdown

0-3MIN

WHAT IT FEELS LIKE You're short of breath and your heart rate spikes. You're trembling and, in an evolutionary response, your body redirects blood to muscles and organs that can help you overcome a threat. Though designed to maximise your odds of survival, this can lead you to misinterpret a minor office crisis as a matter of life and death.

WHAT'S HAPPENING A panic attack occurs when the mind makes a powerfully negative interpretation of normal events. When your boss sets you an impossible deadline, for example, your hypothalamus activates your pituitary and adrenal glands, causing stress hormones

adrenalin and cortisol to flood into your system: the "fight or flight" response. **YOUR DEFENCE** A US study found that refocusing the mind on simple tasks can calm you down. The solution can be as mundane as counting the number of tiles on your office ceiling until the panic passes.

3MIN – 2 HOURS

WHAT IT FEELS LIKE Your breathing normalises and your heart rate falls. "What was that? Am I dying?" you wonder. You're not, despite your sweaty palms and pale, ghostly complexion. **WHAT'S HAPPENING** Adrenalin has a half-life of three minutes, so the initial panic soon passes.

Cortisol, however, sticks around for longer. It can take two hours for your more chronic feelings of stress to subside. **YOUR DEFENCE** Your brain is associating your current situation with a sense of panic. Sitting still, staring at your overflowing inbox, will do nothing to rest your overactive endocrine system. Remove yourself from the situation: leave your desk for a 10-minute break and divert your attention to what's around you, even if that is just what's being served in the office canteen. Eventually,

your cortisol levels will start to even out and you can return to your desk on a more even keel.

1 WEEK

WHAT IT FEELS LIKE Anxiety can easily extend beyond a specific stimulus and hang over you even when you're not in a stressful situation. Unexplained chest pains and a persistent sense of fear are symptoms that your anxiety is becoming a chronic problem. **WHAT'S HAPPENING** These heightened anxieties mean that your hypothalamus is unable to switch off fully. In its state of constant agitation, it'll keep ordering the release of the hormones adrenalin and cortisol; with levels set to surge at any point, the simplest upset can burst the dam. **YOUR DEFENCE** In severe cases, doctors may prescribe you anti-anxiety drugs along with beta blockers to steady your heart rate. Otherwise, these Men's Health all-stars are effective lifestyle prescriptions: omega-3 fatty acids in oily fish, which curb adrenal activation caused by stress; the cortisol-slashing B vitamins in steak; and a lunchtime run, which produces mood-boosting endorphins while making use of the extra adrenalin. Outrun your panic: flight, in this case, might be the best way to fight back.



Future-Proof Your Face

As your skin’s defences weaken, protect it from the inside out

The turnover of your skin cells starts to slow down in your thirties. “The skin can’t defend itself as well as it used to from the environment,” says dermatologist Dr Joshua Zeichner. “Collagen and elastin weaken, and fine lines start to appear.” Products containing retinol (such as Neutrogena Rapid Wrinkle Repair Serum) can stimulate collagen production, which strengthens skin from the inside out and increases cell turnover to keep its surface fresh and diminish signs of ageing. Retinol can irritate your skin at first, so add a pea-sized amount to your moisturiser every other night, working your way up to larger amounts. Then, help your skin cells retain moisture on a daily basis with a hyaluronic acid serum, such as Vichy Minéral 89 Fortifying and Plumping Daily Booster.

THE NUTRIENT YOU NEED NOW

HEALTHY FATS

These are a hallmark of the Mediterranean diet, which studies suggest can reduce your risk of heart disease, the leading killer of men. Your risk shoots up in your forties, so taking pre-emptive measures now will improve your powers of prevention in the next decade. Doubts remain about the effectiveness of supplements, so stick to natural sources and seek out foods rich in monounsaturated fats. Eat to your heart’s content, in other words.

Eat more:
Olive oil, avocado, nuts, mackerel, oysters, anchovies



Disaster Management

Your thirties can be a volatile time for careers and relationships. This is your survival guide to making lighter work of major upheavals

01/ YOU GOT FIRED

Out of a job? So was Steve Jobs at one point in his thirties. “You’re not the first person this has happened to. Understanding that can normalise your experience,” says Professor Geoff Greif of the University of Maryland School of Social Work.

OWN YOUR ROLE: Blaming someone else only works for so long, says clinical psychologist Stephan Poulter. Acknowledge your part in what went wrong: you might figure out what you want (a more engaging gig, say), what you were disappointed with (the lack of responsibility), or what your unspoken expectations were (more flexible hours). “Self-reflection becomes a compass, helping you move forward,” Poulter says.

PLAN YOUR NEXT MOVE: It’s easier to find a new job when you’re already employed. So, network strategically once you’re working again. Seek out interviews, meet with mentors, mentor younger employees and know how your field is evolving and if your skills are, too.

02/ YOU GOT DIVORCED

First marriages that don’t work out typically end in the thirties. The resulting changes can take anything from six to 12 months to process, says Poulter. So, let the dust settle, then use these strategies to saddle up again. **WRITE A NEW STORY:** “People going through separation often struggle to manage their stress,” says psychology professor David Sbarra. It’s fine to analyse the causes (“Is there a pattern in my relationships?”), but you should also step

out of the narrative that “everything is terrible”. Reach out to friends in similar situations, as well as those who are happily married, suggests Greif. Talk to people, listen and create a new road map.

EMBRACE YOUR CORE VALUES: Doing enjoyable activities with people you genuinely like helps to reaffirm who you are and what makes you happy. This is an opportunity to do all the stuff you wanted to but couldn’t in your former situation.

03/ YOU MESSED UP

Whether you unwittingly crossed the line with a co-worker or made a tone-deaf “joke” in a meeting, you need to address the issue.

APOLOGISE PROPERLY: So, your behaviour was out of character, you feel humiliated... But this isn’t about you. “It’s about the person you hurt,” says psychotherapist Avi Klein. Acknowledge the impact of your actions – you made another person feel uncomfortable. Klein advises allowing the other person to decide how they will or won’t interact with you in future. It’s respectful, and it also gives them the agency you denied them – important for levelling out any power imbalances.

PLAN HOW TO MAKE AMENDS: Take the problem seriously. Tell people that you’ll answer any questions. It’s up to you to start difficult conversations and make those around you feel comfortable enough to share their concerns.

PHOTOGRAPHY: JULIAN BENJAMIN, GETTY IMAGES, STUDIO 33, DAN MATTHEWS, LOUISA PARRY, PHILIP HAYNES



IT’S A MARATHON, NOT A SPRINT: START THINKING ABOUT YOUR LONG GAME

YOUR TRANSFORMATION PLAN

How to Get Fitter at 30

THE CHALLENGE Around this age, the number of nerve receptors in your heart declines and your maximum heart rate drops – which is why you’re breathing a little harder on your weekend jog

THE GOAL Run your first half-marathon

THE TIME FRAME 12 weeks

Your thirties undeniably represent a physiological turning point. But rest assured, this is no hairpin bend towards decline – merely a gentle lifting-off-the-throttle from your testosterone-fuelled twenties. The key, therefore, is to act now and shift your focus to building lifelong fitness, not summer-long abs. You need to work on your engine.

Yes, the prospect of a five-mile morning run is making you feel tired already, and these days it takes an extra day to shake the DOMS from your legs. However, there is still plenty of adaptive energy in your muscles and cardio system. With some smart tweaks to your exercise and nutrition plan, you can arrest any decline and become a long-distance contender in weeks. We’ll see you at the start line.



YOUR NEW FITNESS RULES

By Rory Knight, co-founder of running collective Track Life LDN

Consistency Over Intensity

Gone are the days when you could push through your limits recklessly, day in, day out. Be realistic in how you plan to tackle this half-marathon, but remember that slow and steady wins the race. You are far better off operating at 80% for 100% of the time, as opposed to vice-versa. Hit your weekly mile goal, even if you have to walk bits of it.

Prevention Is Better Than Cure

Prioritise adequate recovery. During your rest days, you’re not only recuperating from the session you’ve just done, but preparing for what you plan to do later in the week. The day after a long run or intense speed session should be followed by a gentle jog at most, along with one or more of the following: a massage, foam rolling, cryotherapy, compression wear, a mobility session, or your feet up in front of Netflix.

Work on Your Tekkers

Almost everyone can run. But how many people can run properly? A good coach at a local club such as Track Life LDN will be able to offer pointers and feedback on technique – such as arm or knee drive – which will minimise the impact on your body and ensure you can continue for years to come. Running is, after all, all about efficiency. Better technique requires less effort, which allows you to run further, more easily.



YOUR NEW FOOD RULES

By Rick Miller, London-based clinical and sports dietitian

Timing Is of the Essence

If you’ve always thought more about what you eat than when, now’s the time to change that. Adopt a “train low, compete high” carbohydrate protocol: eat less when training and more on race day. Training in low-carb conditions boosts your numbers of mitochondria, the body’s energy producers. Then, by loading up on race day, you’ll make even better use of those macronutrients.

Go Slow and Low

It’s a good general rule for most people to go for moderate- to low-glycaemic carbs to improve their blood glucose balance: sweet potatoes, legumes, wholegrain pasta, oats, and so on. But this becomes even more important after you hit 30. At this point, mitochondrial density starts to fall in skeletal muscle and this may affect your ability to manage blood glucose levels, causing dips in energy, which can nullify your resolve to train.

Dose Up on Beetroot Juice

If you’ve maxed out on dietary changes, consider this instant endurance hack. Beetroot juice, which is rich in nitrates, has been shown to boost power output during cardio by increasing the production of nitric oxide, a potent vasodilator. This allows more oxygen to saturate muscle tissues. Have a shot of beetroot juice two hours before your race, and you may find yourself speeding ahead when your rivals start to struggle.

THE CHECK-UP

“Due to stress, lack of sleep, sedentary behaviour and even a preference of weightlifting over aerobic exercise, many younger men have high blood pressure,” says Martin M Miner, male health expert at Miriam Hospital in the US. Get yours tested: premature heart attacks can hit by the age of 45, so you need to act ahead of time. Also, start keeping tabs on your waist circumference, says Dr Anand Patel at London’s Centre for Men’s Health, and not just for aesthetic reasons. “Too much visceral fat negatively affects your testosterone and increases your risk of diabetes and heart issues,” he says. Waist over 102cm? Address this now, before it becomes a problem.

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MEN KILLING IT IN THEIR THIRTIES

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Tommy Banks

Michelin-starred Chef

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Chris Hemsworth

God of thunder

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Virgil Abloh

Artistic director, Louis Vuitton

Your Forties

40s
SECURE
YOUR
FUTURE

You're busier at work and at home, your time feels increasingly not your own and your body, both inside and out, seems to be conspiring against you. But get things right in your fifth decade and you'll be set for life. You could find you still have half of it ahead of you



THE NUMBERS

How do your metrics stack up against the regular man in his forties?

BMI 27.8	RESTING HEART RATE 64BPM	DAILY STEPS 10,026	DAILY ACTIVE MINUTES 61	HOURS OF SLEEP 6HR 20MIN
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FINANCIALLY FIT

AT 40

Sure, it's all about the children and your wider responsibilities. But being on the money in your forties means looking after number one, so that you can look after everyone else, says Whateley



SORT OUT YOUR PENSION

Ideally you should have started saving into a pension in your twenties, but now is the time to make it a priority. If you want the lifestyle you have today in retirement, your pension pot needs to be twice your annual income in your forties, rising to seven times by 68, according to investment company Fidelity. One way to boost yours is to move out of your company's fund if it's overly cautious.

WRITE A WILL

If you have dependants, and especially if you're cohabiting, make sure you have a will. If you and your partner do not own a property 50:50 and you're not married, your next of kin will inherit your home, regardless of whether your partner lives in it. Also consider life insurance and "own occupation" income protection if you're unsure how you or your family would meet costs if you fell ill or died. It sounds bleak, but it's really just smart.

GET THE BEST MORTGAGE

If you're on a bad mortgage deal, you could be wasting thousands of pounds, especially if you went on the standard variable rate (SVR) after your original offer came to an end. Mortgage broker Coreco found the average person could save £11,000 in a single year by moving from an SVR to a best-buy tracker rate, based on a borrower with 40% equity in a £500,000 home.

WTF Is Hair Doing Growing There?

You couldn't muster much more than patchy chin fluff in your early manhood. But now, all of a sudden, you look like Teen Wolf's dad at full moon...

It is one of the great ironies of manhood

that when the hair on your head begins to thin, the hair on other parts of your body goes wild – your ears, your shoulders, your left eyebrow (which now proudly sports a single strand three times as long as the rest). And these twin struggles, it turns out, are very much related. Both occur because of a genetic switch that typically happens in your forties, says cosmetic dermatologist Dr Paul Jarrod Frank. "Hair follicles appear to change their reactivity to androgen hormones, particularly dihydrotestosterone (DHT)," he explains. While follicles on the head react to DHT by shedding the hair, follicles on the body can react in the opposite way, increasing growth. "It's one of nature's mysteries," he says.



Most men see their chest hair thickening and experience new growth on their ears, nose, shoulders and back. When this happens, Dr Frank says, there are three options: "Own it, groom it, or destroy it." Your first strike could be taking a finasteride-based product, a common treatment for hair loss that

also works to regulate excess body hair.

But to permanently rid yourself of unwanted fuzz, the best way is to zap it to death with lasers. "Laser hair-removal technology has come a long way," says Dr Frank. "Newer instruments can remove hair painlessly and in half the number of treatments as standard machines." Costs vary, but you're looking at about £200 a session, on average, and you'll need between four and six sessions for a full scorched-earth policy that will last for life.

Drink Like a Grown Up

Workday hangovers were standard in your twenties, but now it's time for a more considered approach



I used to be "a drinker". It

was part of my identity. I was, and still am, very good at drinking. I have a well-grooved order depending on the place, and I know most places. I know how to mix cocktails from memory. I enjoy drinking and, between the ages of 25 and 42, I frequently drank.

"Frequently" means basically every night. Sometimes, those nights were fun, but so many weren't. They were a way to pass the time. And they were not worth the hangovers, which only got worse as I grew older. So, I stopped being "a drinker" and started to become someone who drinks occasionally, and with purpose. That purpose was to socialise with other people who were drinking: at a once-a-month pub meet-up with old friends, say, or if someone was proposing a toast, or if it

would mean a lot to a colleague if I went for a beer after work. Once a week, at the most.

I'm now an intentional drinker. If you want to be one too, here are your back-of-a-beer-mat rules:

- 01/ Never drink alone.** This is pretty much sacrosanct.
- 02/ Never drink anything that is bad:** £4 bottles of wine, or anything you don't like the taste of.
- 03/ Always enjoy the company of the people you're drinking with.** If you don't, just leave.
- 04/ Drink water.** Lots and lots and lots of water. Then drink more water.

So, when you drink, enjoy it, but with purpose and restraint. And the satisfaction of knowing, in the morning, you'll remember everything.

By Ross McCammon



Future-Proof Your Face

Get tough on the causes of skin damage, not just the symptoms

In this decade, most of us develop sunspots and an uneven skintone, largely caused by damage from our earlier years. “Vitamin C is your go-to ingredient,” says Dr Zeichner. “Think of this potent antioxidant as an insurance policy on your sunscreen. Put it on every morning under your SPF.” Try Aesop Perfect Facial Hydrating Cream: a daily dose of vitamin C helps to combat new UV damage, as well as repair existing pigmentation issues. Meanwhile, schedule a yearly full-body check-up with a dermatologist to monitor moles and sunspots. You’re probably fine, but being vigilant is the best way to save your own skin.

THE NUTRIENT YOU NEED NOW FIBRE

Weight management is of paramount importance in your fifth decade, and increasing your fibre intake is the easiest way to fill yourself up without filling out your waistline. Plus, research shows that it can significantly reduce your risk of colon cancer, which can start forming in your forties. There are plenty of delicious food sources, but for an easy win, psyllium husk supplements are a good option.

Eat more:

Berries, mangoes, pears, kale, butternut squash, asparagus



Pain and Gain

From the occasional creaky knee to the more serious slipped disc or blown ligament, the wear and tear of more than four decades can turn into chronic pain. Your best tactic to overcome it is to treat it like a team sport

01/ THE MANAGER

“The strain in pain lies mostly in the brain,” says Dr Sean Mackey – not a poet but the chief of pain medicine at Stanford University. So, consider speaking to a therapist. “Your beliefs and emotions about your pain play a huge role in your experience of it,” he says, and he has the brain scans to prove it. Chronic pain rewires your brain, and therapy can help to undo this. It may not eliminate pain, he says, but it can “give you back control”.

02/ THE PHYSIO

Consider physiotherapy. When a Premier League player injures his knee and needs surgery, the first thing the team doctors do is send him into physical rehab. The same could work for you. “Although it may hurt in the short term, you need to get those muscles strengthened and support the area that’s painful,” says Dr Mackey. Studies show that physiotherapy reduces pain in the long run – so act now for lasting relief.

03/ THE FAMILY

Reducing stress reduces your pain, Dr Mackey says. Thankfully, there are now more options than ever when it comes to tackling it. Apps such as Headspace can guide you through mindfulness lessons, while many gyms offer meditation classes. Involve your family and friends, too – stress is something we all experience, and sharing the load is more effective than trying to bear it alone.

04/ THE SUPPORTERS

Chronic pain isn’t something you want to deal with in stoic silence. Managing it is a long-term effort, and support groups exist to make this easier and less lonely. So, seek out meet-ups where you can compare notes with others. The idea of sharing your experiences of pain with strangers might sound horrendous, but so is enduring a screwed back with no one to talk to who actually understands what it’s like.

PHOTOGRAPHY: JAMIE CHUNG, GETTY IMAGES, DAN MATTHEWS, STUDIO 33



YOUR TRANSFORMATION PLAN

How to Lose Weight at 40

THE CHALLENGE The proven cliff-diving of your metabolism is only being made worse by a lifestyle that leaves little spare time for the gym, so middle-aged spread is proving tricky to outflank

THE GOAL Lose 5kg

THE TIME FRAME 12 weeks

While it’s true that long-time, ardent gym-goers can continue to get stronger and fitter in their forties and beyond, the physiological realities of this phase of your life stack the cheesy chips in favour of weight gain. A drop-off in testosterone makes it harder to maintain

muscle mass, which, combined with the gradual slowing of your metabolic rate, causes you to burn far fewer calories than you did in your prime.

This is also the age when work, family and niggles have likely conspired to put the brakes on your training. Possibly even the handbrake. To reinvigorate your fat-burning potential – as well as your excitement about training – you need to start slow and stay consistent, whether you’re in the gym or the kitchen.



YOUR NEW FITNESS RULES

By Jack Sorrels of Life Time North Meridian

Develop a Baseline

To stave off sarcopenia, the age-related loss of muscle that hits many men in their forties, you need to build it up. But first, become consistent with low-volume work. Too much intensity after a long lay-off will leave you out of action with soreness. Aim for light or bodyweight exercises with higher rep ranges – 12-15 reps for just two or three sets.

Engage Before Exercise

Among the key differences between 20-year-olds and the 40-plus is that your body has had far more time to develop the bad habits that can lead to injury. Always spend 10-15 minutes warming up, stretching tight tissues (hip flexors and pecs if you sit often) and awakening dormant muscles (the rhomboid muscles in your back) with resistance band drills.

Ramp Up to Muscle Growth

After four weeks of low-volume work, you’ll be ready to accelerate your strength building, performing 8-12 reps per set – a range that will help you build muscle. Supersets and circuits can unlock fresh fitness: pairing, say, bench presses with 30 seconds of rowing to increase your heart rate.



YOUR NEW FOOD RULES

By Kristen Cohen, trainer and certified nutrition coach, Life Time North Meridian

Choose a Goal a Week

Tackle everything all at once and you’ll easily feel overwhelmed. One week, focus on drinking three litres of water each day; another week, try to cut back on added sugars. As the weeks go by, you’ll accumulate beneficial behaviours with far less stress than if you took on multiple goals simultaneously. And you won’t beat yourself up as much. Which is nice.

Visualise Your Meals

This might sound like hokum, but trust in the process. Envision yourself making more nutritious options early in the workday and you’re more likely to stick to your eating plan later. The same goes for family gatherings and nights out at the weekend. It’s the simplest willpower workaround going.

Check In with Yourself

The number on the scale isn’t your only marker of progress. Even if the needle hasn’t shifted as much as you expected it to, consider all the other aspects of life that have progressed. Are you sleeping better? Feeling more confident? More energised? More motivated? That stuff counts. Food for thought, and holistically nutritious, too.

THE CHECK-UP

Get a blood glucose test, regardless of your BMI. A third of people over 45 are prediabetic, and that includes those with a healthy weight. The NHS offers a set of health checks after you reach 40, including blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol, says Dr Patel, so ensure you schedule an appointment. Prediabetes can be reversed through lifestyle changes, but it’s tougher if left to develop into type 2. Mind your testosterone levels, too. “Some studies suggest a third of diabetics will develop low testosterone,” Dr Patel says, while he estimates it affects one in 10 men over 40. Seek help if you notice warning signs such as lethargy, low moods and erectile dysfunction.

MEN KILLING IT IN THEIR FORTIES



Tom Brady
NFL legend

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Jamie Oliver
Chef and food activist

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Jamie Redknapp
Pundit/ clothes horse

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Nikolaj Coster-Waldau
Actor, see page 46

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Jay-Z
Rapper and music mogul

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Your Fifties

50s+
OWN YOUR
NEW SILVER
AGE

...and beyond. Yes, you can still stay fit. In fact, you *should* stay fit. Make these simple lifestyle changes to run further, lift heavier and think faster than people half your age. Keep yourself ahead of the pack

THE NUMBERS

How do you stack up against the average man in his fifties?

BMI	RESTING HEART RATE	DAILY STEPS	DAILY ACTIVE MINUTES	HOURS OF SLEEP
28.1	64 ^{BPM}	9,993	65	6 ^{HR} 20 ^{MIN}



Future-Proof Your Face

Smart grooming will overcome the ravages of Father Time

Don't take this personally but, in your fifties, skin can grow "dry and dull", says dermatologist Dr Zeichner. It loses hydration and takes longer to purge dead cells, which can give it a sallow look. Using hydrating creams will help, as well as exfoliators such as Dr Dennis Gross Alpha Beta Extra Strength Daily Peel. "Hydroxy acid dissolves the connections between your skin cells, so they can be shed more easily," explains Dr Zeichner. Use a cleanser that won't disrupt your pH balance, such as Dove Sensitive Skin Beauty Bar, and sunscreen, too: this isn't the time to embrace the Marbella look.

THE NUTRIENT YOU NEED NOW

POTASSIUM

"Your risk of hypertension [high blood pressure] increases every year," says Dr Roussel. But cutting back on bar snacks isn't the only way to offset your risk. "Potassium balances the sodium in your diet and supports healthy blood pressure." As a bonus, greens that contain potassium also tend to be rich in fibre, which will help with blood-sugar control. A word of caution: potassium supplements can put you at risk of overdosing, leading to heart issues.

Eat more

Apricots, artichokes, beetroot, Brussels sprouts, potatoes



YOUR TRANSFORMATION PLAN

How to Hit Reset at 50

THE CHALLENGE At this age, all those heart disease and diabetes statistics can start to feel a little too real. It's time to work towards longevity

THE GOAL Rebalance your blood sugar and lose fat

THE TIME FRAME 10 weeks

It's not easy to maintain a superhuman six-pack in middle age – the time-defying mutant Hugh Jackman is an exception, not the rule. But striving for high energy levels, solid cardio fitness and impeccable health metrics? These are wholly achievable goals. And worthy ones, too: after the age of 45, men's risk of heart attack increases steadily, with your mid-sixties being prime time for a cardiovascular event. The same goes for type 2 diabetes. Taking control of your health now could save your life in the decades to come.

Muscle mass may be harder to maintain now (again, we invoke the Jackman clause), but stamina is one of the last things to wane, so there's no reason you shouldn't be able to keep up with your grandchildren/nephew/dog. Focus on what you can do, not what you can't, and you'll be surprised how far you can push yourself.

FINANCIALLY FIT

AT 50

The finish line is almost within sight. Maximise your savings and plan for a smoother retirement with these tips from Whatoley. You've bloody well earned it



SCRUTINISE YOUR PENSION

Get serious about when and how you're going to retire, plus how much you'll retire on. You might want to consolidate your pensions from previous employers. If so, PensionBee has a handy app to track them all down. Make sure you know what state pension you could be entitled to. Request a statement from gov.uk/check-state-pension.

DE-RISK YOUR SAVINGS

As your pensions and investments grow, you should focus on capital protection as well as capital growth, advises Patrick Connolly of financial advisers Chase de Vere. You should still invest in shares for their growth potential – but you should also hold money in other assets such as fixed-interest and property, to provide diversification and reduce your overall investment risk.

USE YOUR TAX-FREE ALLOWANCES

Maximise your pension allowance. Anyone under the age of 75 can contribute as much of their annual salary as they choose tax-free into a pension or £40,000, whichever is lower. Don't forget your Isa allowance, too, which is now £20,000. Interest earned on money in an Isa is tax-free. It's worth seeing a financial adviser to weigh up your options.



YOUR NEW FITNESS RULES

By Kirk McFarland, PT and nutrition coach at Life Time Eden Prairie

Play It Safe to Start

If you're fairly new to the game – or you've taken an extended gym hiatus – the last thing you should be doing is leaping into a hard-core programme. McFarland recommends basic moves that are unlikely to lead to injuries, such as the plank, bird dog and rotator cuff exercises to strengthen his spine and shoulder joints. For metabolic conditioning, he favours rowing. These moves will build strength without overloading your muscles.

Switch Things Up

Taking it easy isn't imperative. You can work out six days a week if

you're smart. Alternate between days of fast-paced strength training – using light weights and bodyweight moves – and interval-style cardio on a treadmill, stationary bike, elliptical trainer and rower. This approach stimulates muscle growth one day and ramps up your heart rate the next.

Listen to Your Body

There will be days when you feel burned out or sore. Ignore this feedback at your peril: training through the pain puts you at greater risk of injury. If you don't feel up to a full session, go for a brisk walk, outside or on the gym treadmill. This will increase your overall calorie expenditure and improve blood flow to your muscles, without wearing you out ahead of tomorrow's session.



YOUR NEW FOOD RULES

McFarland's advice for intelligent eating

Get Tested for Diabetes

It's more common than you think: more than five million Britons are expected to have diabetes by 2025. It's worth noting that diabetes will affect your weight-loss efforts: you'll have to exercise caution with carbs, making popular carb-heavy, low-fat plans unsuitable. Speak to your GP before making any major changes to your diet.

Eat Your Greens

The warning your mum gave you when you were a boy is worth heeding now, too. Cruciferous vegetables – cabbage, kale, broccoli and cauliflower – provide crucial fibre and disease-fighting antioxidants for a minimal calorie count. For a simple slaw, thinly slice and combine with a splash of red-wine vinegar and a little salt and pepper. Alternatively, chop and toss into a stir-fry.

Don't Blacklist Red Meat

Many default to lean chicken and white fish when on a "diet", particularly if they're mindful of their metabolic health. But, combined with a low carb intake, this approach risks excessively dropping your calorie intake, which will inhibit recovery after your gym sessions. Pork, oily fish and steak will make up for the calories you're losing. Don't just survive your fifties – enjoy them. 🍖

THE CHECK-UP

Prostate cancer is now the most common form of cancer in UK men, but the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test is controversial. "A raised PSA doesn't necessarily equate to cancer, and you can have a normal PSA and still have cancer," says Dr Patel. "Talk it through with your doctor." If you're concerned about your risk, don't shy away from a fingertip examination. "These are important," says Dr Patel. Finally, schedule an inspection of your, erm, stool. While a bowel-screening poo test is regularly sent to people aged 60-74, some areas also offer a one-off "sigmoidoscopy" (like a mini-colonoscopy) from the age of 50. Remember: dealing with these problems now is a lot more comfortable...

MEN KILLING IT IN THEIR FIFTIES AND BEYOND



Hugh Jackman
X-Man

50



Laird Hamilton
Big wave surfer

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Samuel L. Jackson
Badass

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Paul Smith
Menswear designer

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David Attenborough
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