

The **90-DAY** BODYWEIGHT CHALLENGE

FOR MEN



Bestselling Author of
You Are Your Own Gym

**MARK
LAUREN**

WITH **JULIAN GALINSKI**

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The 90-Day Bodyweight Challenge proposes a program of diet and exercise recommendations for the reader to follow. However, you should consult a qualified medical professional before starting this or any other fitness program. As with any diet or exercise program, if at any time you experience discomfort, stop immediately and consult your physician.

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Welcome to the fitness challenge of a lifetime!

You've decided to take on my 90-Day Challenge? Fantastic! Perhaps you've been working out regularly, but haven't seen the results you expected. Or maybe you just realized that you want to feel stronger, physically and mentally, and you're ready to take the first step. Whether you're an experienced exerciser or a beginner, my unique training program will give you the tools to achieve complete mind/body fitness. Being fit is much more than having ripped abs and bulging biceps. The goal is not just to look great in the mirror, but also to feel healthy, confident, and powerful enough to handle the problems we all encounter during the course of our lives. By committing to 90 days of progressively intensive exercises that use your own bodyweight as resistance, you will increase your strength, endurance, willpower and flexibility, and improve your coordination and posture. Nutritional advice, including recipes

and a menu plan, and lifestyle tips round out the program to help you achieve your full physical, intellectual, and emotional potential.

For the next three months, I will be spending every day with you. I will be right here as your trainer and companion, to encourage and motivate, to advise and look after you. Not just during the workouts, but also during your mealtimes and regeneration periods. Thanks to this comprehensive program, you will achieve astonishing results, fast. As you progress, you will learn everything you need to know about getting your body into the best shape possible. I have created 12 different high-intensity workouts using completely new exercises that train the entire body. Doing these daily workouts and following the individually tailored diet and nutrition plan will help you reach your goals.

Allow me to introduce myself: Mark Lauren—your personal trainer

I was born in the United States in 1977. My Filipino father was in the U.S. Army and was stationed in Germany right after boot camp. He met my mother there, where she was just finishing school, and they married in the U.S. Soon after I was born, we moved back to Germany, living near Frankfurt for eight years before returning to the States in 1986.

Both my parents were naturally athletic, as was my maternal grandfather, who was a runner-up for the Olympic freestyle wrestling team. My grandfather was the reason that I wrestled for several years throughout my childhood, until I graduated high school. At the age of 13, I joined my school's track & field team. From my coach, I learned about the principles of overload and supercompensation.* I started doing push-ups and sit-ups, which is how my journey with bodyweight training began.

In 1996 I joined the military and trained as a Special Tactics Combat Controller.** The curriculum included open- and closed-circuit scuba diving, water survival, static-line parachuting, military free fall, POW survival training, close air support, search and rescue, airfield seizures, and infiltration techniques, along with a wide variety of other training objectives.

After a year and a half, my training continued while I was on a deployable team at the 22nd Special Tactics Squadron at McChord Air Force Base in Washington. After just three years on the teams, I was chosen to become a trainer.

On September 6, 2001, I became an instructor at Keesler Air Force Base in Mississippi. Five days

after I received my new assignment, the September 11 attack shook the world, America, and especially the U.S. Armed Forces. Almost overnight, there was tremendous pressure to graduate higher numbers of soldiers who had the skills to carry out ultra-dangerous missions. The question was how to train them quickly, without compromising quality.

I worked with the elite troops of U.S. Special Operations, for whom achieving peak fitness is more than just life enhancing—it's *life-saving*. These soldiers (Navy SEALs and Army Green Berets, e.g.) are world-famous for their discipline and unbreakable willpower. They take on the most difficult and dangerous war-zone missions, regardless of the risk to their own lives. They must be ready to give 100% at any moment. What they don't have is time.

After 9/11, I urgently started learning more about and applying principles of sports physiology to create a simpler and more effective fitness program. It's often said that I revolutionized the training regime of the toughest men in the world. When I started as a Special Tactics instructor, the "more is more" principle had been received wisdom. Soldiers trained too hard and ran for too long. The result: a terrifyingly high injury rate. Until, that is, I introduced my bodyweight concept, along with sound training principles, and whittled it down to the essentials. Lo and behold, the recruits got stronger, in much less time than before. Injury rates plummeted; fitness levels rose. And I'm very proud and privileged to report that many of my trainees went on to become highly decorated war heroes.

* Exercising is a process of applying stress, recovering from that stress, and then becoming slightly more adapted to that stress. The third phase, in which you get stronger, is called supercompensation.

** Combat controllers are the Air Force's premier ground special operations force, and the U.S. Special Operations' air integrator force. They deploy into austere and hostile conditions through land, air, and sea, to establish air field landing zones and drop zones, communicating with air assets to provide air control and precision air strikes for special operations ground forces.



Over the years, I have continuously expanded and improved the training concept originally developed for elite soldiers, and have made it flexible enough to suit everyone. The program and exercises I developed to get those tough young men fit for active duty at top speed had other benefits: they could be done anywhere and they cost nothing, since no fitness equipment was required. We trained using our bodyweight as resistance, along with a few easily available household items, such as towels.

Today, I work primarily with people just like you, ordinary civilians who want a solid foundation of physical and psychological fitness, but who can't spend hours at a gym. Not that spending hours at a gym is necessary. As you may already know, you always have access to a gym—your own body! Bodyweight training has proved its worth many times over, not just for elite Special Operations troops, but also for everyone who has tried it.

These advantages are probably the reason why *Mark Lauren* products are now familiar to millions of people all over the world: in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland alone, more than a million people keep themselves fit using my bodyweight training concept.

That's another reason why I continue developing the *Mark Lauren* product line (available at www.MarkLauren.com) and have written this latest book: I want as many people as possible to enjoy success with this very simple concept. I want *you* to be successful!

People of all ages, with widely varying objectives, have started following my bodyweight training principles. Skinny teenagers have transformed themselves into strong, self-confident young men; seniors who thought that exercise was no longer an option have won a new lease of life by regaining

strength and flexibility, even at an advanced age. One thing unites them all: whenever and wherever people have worked out using the *Mark Lauren* bodyweight training methods, they have been successful—without having to pay for expensive gym memberships or fitness equipment, and above all, with a time/results ratio that is second to none.

The messages I've been receiving from those who follow the program attest to its effectiveness. It's such a pleasure when someone writes to me saying, "Mark, you changed my life." Or when someone starts using my program and finally manages to lose weight, or put on a few pounds of muscle. I love it when my training program helps people to become stronger, healthier, and, at the end of the day, happier too.

For myself, bodyweight training is an irreplaceable part of my life, because it gives me agency. We can't control the world, but we can control

ourselves—and ultimately, it is only this feeling of mastery that gives us the power to influence our environment.

Working out is a metaphor for life itself: we set targets, we get started, we don't give up—and in the end we are successful. The journey is hard, it demands everything from us, and when we achieve our goals, we are rewarded with a sense of accomplishment and strengthened resolve.

The 90-Day Bodyweight Challenge is the same. You will struggle. But when you finish, you will be proud of your achievements and your new body. Not only will your body be stronger, but your willpower and ability to withstand pain of all kinds will dramatically improve, too. Week after week, you will work out hard, eat mindfully, and continue learning. It is my most sincere wish that when your Challenge is complete, you too will say, "Mark, you changed my life!" I would be honored.

What makes bodyweight training so effective?

None of us are blind to the lures of the fitness industry, which has an inescapable advertising presence. The message is: if you join this particular gym or buy that particular fitness product, then training success is somehow magically guaranteed. Of course, the idea that health and fitness can simply be bought is a seductive one. We go to slick gyms and order the most expensive supplements available so we can pat ourselves on the back for having "invested" in our well-being and quality of life. Yet the main beneficiaries are those health and fitness companies' bank accounts—and their marketing

departments will have chalked up another success.

You, on the other hand, bought this book, or perhaps you received it as a gift; it makes no difference. You probably already know what I'm about to say: fitness doesn't need to cost a lot of money. You don't need a gym, and you don't need any trendy fitness equipment. Not even dumbbells! It really is so simple (and cheap) to get fit and strong and improve your appearance. The only things you need are knowledge and motivation: the know-how to use your own body as a fitness center, and the

motivation to start a program and stick with it. That is the essence of my bodyweight training method. *The 90-Day Bodyweight Challenge* has made working out without gym equipment simpler, and at the same time harder. Simpler, because I tell you exactly how to train and how to eat. There's no need for you to put together different exercises and training plans yourself. All you have to do is follow my instructions for 90 days and success will follow. Harder, because this is an intensive program, which means you have to put complete focus on your fitness for a set amount of time every day in order to achieve the best results.

If this is your first taste of an exercise regime, you should regard the Challenge as a fitness boot camp that will leave you in the best shape of your life and teach you all you need to know about living a fit, healthy lifestyle. If you already have training experience, the Challenge will fine-tune your form, accelerate your progress, and enhance your well-being.

What I demand from you is this: during our 30-minute workouts, three or four times a week, be prepared to give *everything*. And during these 90 days, say goodbye to one or two old habits. If you want to look like an athlete, you have to train like an athlete!

First, you ought to know what unbeatable advantages bodyweight training offers, the financial aspect being just one of many. Classic strength training, using machines found in most gyms, isolates individual muscles and stimulates them in a way that we never replicate in real life. The movements the machines require are often almost comically distant from reality. When was the last time, besides in a gym, that you lay down on your stomach and started bending your legs? Maybe you have friends who like to hit the gym to get "pumped" and who swear by machines and free weights. It's quite possible they won't understand why you don't work out the same way that they do. Let them talk—results are all that matters. And I'm not just talking about strength.

My bodyweight training is functional, improving the movements we use in daily life. It improves your balance and coordination, and it greatly increases resistance to injury. Every exercise in each of the movement categories—pushing, pulling, bending, and squatting—also strengthens and targets the core. You'll learn to use your body as a cohesive whole, rather than as isolated parts.

If you work out systematically, you will get stronger and have more energy. Your cardiovascular and respiratory systems will be strengthened, and your muscular endurance will improve. Speed, balance, coordination, and flexibility will all benefit. A systematic approach will improve your posture and help you move more gracefully. And, of course, you will look better, too.

One thing is certain: we're not training to master a particular exercise, to rack up an ever larger number of reps, or to pack on raw muscle mass at the cost of flexibility and health. We work out in order to be as functionally fit as possible and to be more successful in *life*.

Anyone who uses my training programs to exercise without using fitness equipment understands that we train for function and that form follows function, not the other way round. I firmly believe that a training program that corresponds to the demands of life outside of the gym is what's most effective in improving both performance and aesthetic appearance.

You can work out anywhere: at home, on a business trip, on vacation, indoors or outdoors. Hey, you have your own personal gym right there with you. My program provides variations for many of the exercises, so that it may be easily modified for people with widely varying fitness levels. Even my grandmother can do push-ups, by supporting herself on a table with her hands. Far too easy, you say? Then put your *feet* on a chair, and do your push-ups with one arm!

Maybe you're thinking: "But I should go jogging three times a week, too, just like my friend Jack! He seems pretty fit to me." Look, it doesn't matter whether you want to burn fat, build muscle, or do both at the same time: traditional endurance training, such as jogging, simply cannot compete with high-intensity bodyweight strength training.

On the contrary: endurance training can lead the body to favor its weakest, lowest-volume muscle fibers—"slow twitch" fibers—while the bigger and stronger "fast twitch" muscles remain undeveloped. Indeed, why would they develop, since they aren't required for regular endurance exercise? We can see the results of this most clearly in professional long-distance runners, who are mostly very thin, without much muscle tone.

Take this simple calculation: the body requires around 9 calories a day to maintain 1 lb (.45 kg)* of muscle mass. Building up and maintaining an extra 5 lb (2.25 kg) of muscle mass will cause it to burn around 1,350 calories a month—giving you a metabolic boost, even while at rest!

During *The 90-Day Bodyweight Challenge* you will work out in intervals—and that does not mean schlepping lethargically from one fitness station to another like many people do at the gym. We work in short, high-intensity units: 15 to 25 min-

utes spent alternating between maximum effort and brief rest periods. These workouts are a real challenge for your cardiovascular system exactly because they challenge many muscles at once. Why interval training? Because to achieve the best results, every second counts. Dead time and distractions have no place here. Interval training burns calories like a furnace and produces positive changes in body composition faster, better, and more effectively than any other form of strength training. It's hard work, no doubt. But the cost-benefit analysis speaks for itself. In other words: no other form of exercise gives you better results for your sweat.

Another fundamental benefit is that while carbohydrates serve as the energy source during interval training, fat continues to be burned long after you have finished exercising (the "afterburn effect"), because the body needs to repair muscles, strengthen ligaments and tendons, increase bone density, and make neurological adaptations.

If you want to get as fit as possible as fast as possible, interval strength training is your fast-track to success! Following the intensive program in this book means following the most convenient and effective fitness concept to date. And you'll be able to treat yourself a little too, using the money you didn't spend on expensive gadgets or gym memberships.

HOO-YA!

You will come across "Hoo-ya!" boxes many times in this book. They provide information that offers you a deeper insight into the topic on that page, or an extra building block of fitness knowledge. "Hoo-ya!" is a U.S. Special Forces battle cry and can be traced back to Native American groups. "Give me more!" is a rough translation. They would shout "Hoo-ya!" before a battle, letting the enemy know in no uncertain terms what to expect. You can see why Special Forces adopted the expression.

* This book uses U.S. measurements with metric equivalents in parentheses, unless otherwise noted.

Why men exercise

There are many reasons to exercise regularly for fitness and strength. Let's start with the most obvious ones: an attractive, athletic physique gives you sex appeal and self-confidence. Broad shoulders, well-defined chest and back musculature, and chiseled six-pack abs simply look good and attract the admiration of potential sexual and life partners.

Someone who likes his body, who clearly has the self-discipline to take care of himself, is perceived quite differently than someone who shuffles past, hunched over and tentative. A well-trained body, rather than a sports car, represents true excellence: good posture and balanced, coordinated movement are guaranteed to make a big impression, whether suited up or at the beach. And let me make one thing clear: I'm not talking about insane eight-packs and sub-5% body fat, but about real fitness that anyone can achieve with training that fits into his daily schedule.

It makes a huge difference whether you look at yourself in the mirror in the morning and sigh, or if you start your day with a smile and a real sense of satisfaction about your appearance. Some, especially those who are insecure, call it vanity. I call it strength and confidence. They forget—or ignore—the fact that since time immemorial, it has been a fundamental human aspiration to be better prepared for the challenges that life throws at us.

There's far more to it than just looking good. When you see people with well-trained bodies, you naturally assume that their general physical ability is above average, and that their heart, lungs, and circulation are in good working order. There's a higher probability that they will avoid injury and illness, in both the short and the long run. Again and again, I hear people who don't exercise and who eat indis-

criminatingly say: "Life is for living." I always think to myself: "Let's talk again in 20 years' time." Besides, it's simply a matter of moderation, not the 100% exclusion of anything. Trust me, you will enjoy your vices far better and longer by demonstrating some self-control. Think of your occasional sacrifices as investments in your future!

People who work out sensibly and with purpose have learned to focus—and to torture themselves a little bit too, if that's what's needed. They set goals and reach them. They know how to prioritize, sorting the important from the inessential; they put the most effort into exercises that give the best results in the shortest amount of time. They eat healthy foods that nourish the body and support their physical exertions.

Even if you're one of those rare genetic freaks born with a great-looking body, you're still going to have to work hard to achieve true fitness.

This book might be your first experience of an exercise program—or your reintroduction after a long break. Either way, rest assured that you aren't wasting your time with a patchwork of ineffective methods and overpriced gym memberships. You have chosen the most direct route to your goal, the straightest line between where you are now and where you want to be.

Fitness is made up of many factors, including strength, speed, power, balance, coordination, and stamina. My workouts address the entire range while teaching you how to move properly. That's what makes my program so effective. You keep working on developing efficient movement patterns, and a v-taper, broad chest, chiseled abs, sculpted arms, and powerful legs will happen naturally.



A strong, well-conditioned body is not just muscular...

Don't put unnecessary pressure on yourself. Nowhere else are promises so lightly made and tricks so casually employed as in the health and fitness industry. Don't be put off by those fitness models who smirk at you from magazine covers. Those photos are almost always the product of diuretics and other drugs, extreme dieting, fake tans, a good pump, and oil, plus perfect lighting and the magic of Photoshop editing. Don't get me wrong, the models still deserve credit, but I assure you they don't walk around looking like that on a daily basis. Quite the contrary! And forget the massive bodybuilders—most of those guys aren't fit at all. In fact, their addiction to more muscle at all costs compromises their health and athletic performance. In my view, it's a backwards approach: they train to look like they have a lot of physical ability, but their methods often lead to injuries, long-term health problems, and very little functional value outside of the gym. You and I, we will train to attain physical ability. And an attractive physique will be the by-product, because it's the appearance of ability, and the confidence that comes with it, that people are attracted to, not the muscles.



... it's also flexible!

If you train hard regularly, eat well, and rest when you need to, then results will follow automatically. And you should know that increased testosterone production from intense strength training will propel your sex life to new heights. It's yours for the taking: a more active and fulfilling life.

So don't let anyone distract you from your goals. Society's image of masculinity is restrictive, often wrongly pressuring us to eat, train, and generally behave a certain way. Your social conditioning may make it very difficult to break through this programming. But you can't let yourself be held back by someone else's outdated worldviews, feelings, or opinions. Don't let your actions and emotional well-being be dependent on others. Look and think for yourself. You decide what makes the most sense, what's effective and what's not. Together, you and I are going to bring the best out of you and your body over the next 90 days. Emotional, intellectual, and physical independence are the most masculine traits that can be cultivated. Be calm, determined, and committed with everything that you do. Forget about having huge muscles in an immobile body, blindly following the widely accepted social norms. Take control of yourself and set your own standards!

Strength training: How it works

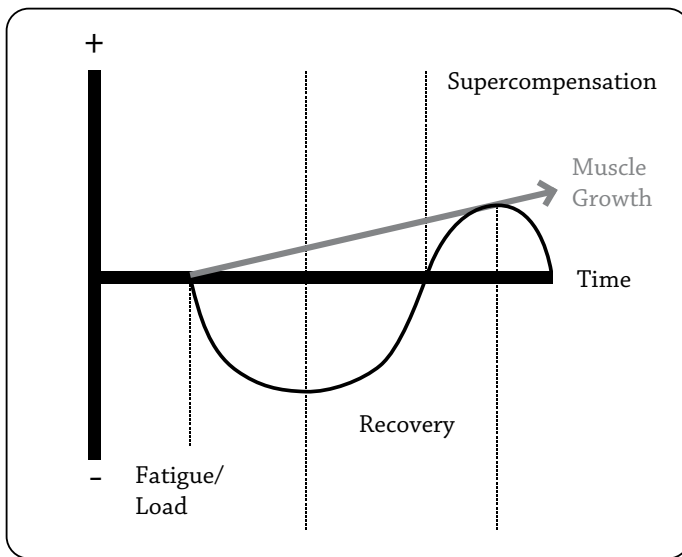
This book is not a scientific treatise. Nevertheless, strength training causes changes in your body, and you should understand the basic principles behind them.

When you work out (i.e., when you put significantly more strain on your muscles than normal), the parts of the body involved are damaged on a microscopic level. Sound unhealthy? It really isn't. Your body doesn't just repair the damage in the muscles, it *strengthens* the damaged structures in preparation for the next time they are put under stress. This is an aspect of what is known as supercompensation, and it is the principle we use to make our muscles stronger and stronger. In effect, we force our bodies

to adapt to more intense stimuli and more demanding tasks.

Picture it like this: a sheet of paper represents a muscle. You work out—and the paper tears a little at the edge. After the workout, the body adapts—you tape up the tear. That part of the paper is actually now stronger than before—this is supercompensation. And so it goes, step by step, workout by workout. Your muscles become more resistant, and therefore bigger too.

Take a look at this diagram, which illustrates the concept of supercompensation:



If a period of stress is followed by an appropriate recovery phase, the body responds with supercompensation.

It's not just the muscular system that adapts to overload. The cardiovascular and nervous systems also adapt. For example, the transport of nutrients in the blood works more efficiently, and muscular contractions are better coordinated.

It's worth repeating: training for 30 minutes, a couple of times a week or more, will exponen-

tially increase your strength and injury resistance. To say nothing of that priceless feeling of well-being. When you exercise and maintain an active lifestyle, it's almost impossible not to like yourself. It's undeniable: the benefits of strength training are just as much psychological as they are physical.

The 90-Day Bodyweight Challenge: What to expect

Whether you are already using any of my other products available on www.MarkLauren.com, such as *You Are Your Own Gym*, or you're starting from scratch, it doesn't matter. Either way, *The 90-Day Bodyweight Challenge* will provide you with new techniques and advice that produce clear-cut results. This is an intensive exercise and lifestyle program that is unlike anything else. Be prepared for significant changes in how you look, move, feel, and think!

Why 90 days? On the one hand, this time frame is short enough to be tackled with full commitment of mind and body. On the other, it's long enough for fundamental lifestyle changes to take root. In three months you will be in the best condition of your life—stronger, healthier, and more confident than you've ever been, with the knowledge and resolve to continue for the rest of your life. I will tell you everything you need to know and do to achieve that.

Just follow my instructions to the letter. You will work out three or four times a week. On the off days, we will focus on regeneration, nutrition, or lifestyle.

Each day, you will have at least one task to complete (and sometimes a bonus task as well). It's critical that you complete *all* of them—this is the challenge you accepted with this book. The program will be tough on you, that is clear. No question, you will be taken to your physical limits, and even be forced to re-examine some other aspects of your life. But hey, you bought this book because you want to change something about your life, which first requires a change in thinking. Seize that chance, and accept these challenges for the next 90 days. I will support you every step of the way. I know exactly how it feels to draw on everything you've got and claw your way to the finish. Chances are, you'll reach a point during one of the workouts where you want to punt this book across the room and hurl some choice words at me. No worries. Just get through it, however you can, and keep coming back!

Take note: today's chore is tomorrow's good habit! The information and instruction I give you on any given day goes forward into the rest of the challenge—and hopefully, the rest of your life as well.

The 90-Day Bodyweight Challenge Schedule

Weeks 1 to 4

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Workout	Know-how	Workout	Lifestyle	Workout	Lifestyle	Recovery

Weeks 5 to 13

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Workout	Workout	Know-how	Workout	Workout	Lifestyle	Recovery

We're going to work our way forward, step by step, from the basics of achieving an active and healthy lifestyle to more advanced, fine-tuned techniques. In the first four weeks we build the foundation of a successful exercise regime, integrated with a nutritious diet, optimal hydration, a winning attitude, and sufficient rest—sleep being of critical importance. For the following four weeks, we focus on the

habits of your daily life: how to eat properly, overcome difficult circumstances or obstacles to help you complete the Challenge, and how to treat yourself occasionally with a clear conscience. In the final part of the program we ensure that your new way of life takes deep root. We prepare you for an active, enjoyable lifestyle that becomes your “new normal.” The 13 weeks of the Challenge look like this:

Coaching, Week by Week

Week 1	The perfect diet
Week 2	Drink as much as you can—but no calories!
Week 3	Your goals—KO each workout
Week 4	Sleep—the silver bullet
Week 5	Plan right, eat right
Week 6	Overcoming the toughest obstacles
Week 7	Temptation and how to resist it
Week 8	Smart rewards
Week 9	Supplements—fact and fiction
Week 10	The soundtrack to your life!
Week 11	Fitness is fun
Week 12	Fit for life!
Week 13	Final Checklist, Parts I and II

To better plan your daily routine, always look over tomorrow's schedule today. That way, you know whether to expect a workout or a shopping trip, and you can think about fitting it into your day. However, there is little to be gained by planning more than a day in advance. Simply focus on your tasks for the day and be alert and motivated as you go about completing them. Besides, surprises are definitely more exciting than spoilers.

Your most important objective for *The 90-Day Bodyweight Challenge*: Finish it! And “finished” means that all the individual assignments have been completed in full. If you can do that, you will also reach your personal goals. Muscle gain and fat loss will take care of themselves.