

NOTHING CAN STOP  
**DWAYNE  
JOHNSON**

**WITH MILLIONS OF FANS  
WORLDWIDE, THE STAR OF  
*HERCULES* HAS CEMENTED HIS  
LEGACY BY TAKING EVERY  
FAILURE AND TURNING IT  
INTO A VICTORY.**

**BY MATT TUTHILL**





**PEAK CONDITION**  
Johnson, a few weeks before *Hercules* began filming.

PER BERNAL

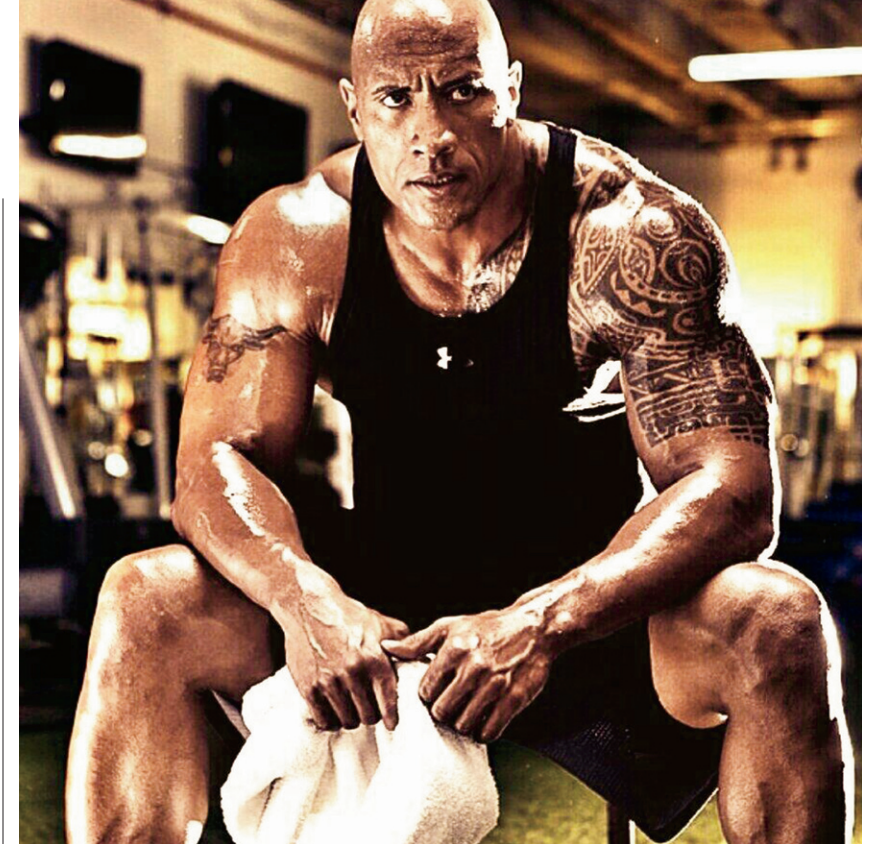
**DWAYNE JOHNSON** could tell something was wrong. For all his years in the ring, and for all the times his alter ego The Rock had been dropped on an announcer's table, slammed headfirst into a steel post, or forced to finish a match as blood gushed down his forehead in rivers, he had never felt anything quite like this. Lying in the center of the ring, with more than 80,000 fans screaming for him to get up, he wasn't sure if he could. There was a sharp pain at the top of his right quad, and as it intensified, he could feel the strength in that leg dissipating by the second.

This wasn't part of the act. It was April 7, 2013, and The Rock was headlining *WrestleMania 29* with John Cena at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, NJ. The two Superstars had just completed a sequence in which they landed several finishing moves on one another: The Rock hit Cena with a "Rock Bottom," Cena answered with an "Attitude Adjustment," The Rock responded with a "People's Elbow," and so on. At the end of the sequence, The Rock writhed in apparent anguish on the mat, sweat pouring out of him, teeth clenched. He appeared to sell his misery a little too hard.

"The match was scheduled to go approximately 50 minutes," Johnson says. "I asked the referee, 'How much time do we have left?' He said, 'Well, we've got about another 25 minutes. Are you OK?' I said, 'Yeah, I'm good.'"

Johnson was not good. Somewhere along the way, he tore the adductor and rectus tendons from his right quad off of his pelvis. When he stood up, the leg had all the stability of a boiled noodle. He shuffled around on it to see if he could get by relying mostly on his good leg and made the decision that he'd finish.

"A lot of times, when wrestlers get hurt in the ring, you either tell the referee and the referee would tell the other wrestler, or you'd whisper



**FORGED IN IRON**  
When he's not on set, Johnson is usually in the gym, improving his already legendary physique.

to the other wrestler if you got the chance," Johnson says. "I didn't want to tell John I was hurt. Knowing John the way I know him—very closely by the time we got into that match—I knew he'd have that on his mind. He'd want to make sure he didn't hurt me anymore. The match was an iconic match. I wanted the focus to remain on the match."

It's not hard to understand why Johnson pushed it. Besides what this singular matchup represented for wrestling fans, this night was the culmination of a feud spanning three *WrestleManias* and would mark the beginning of another semiretirement for Johnson, now 42, who was scheduled to begin filming *Hercules* about two weeks later. As one of the most beloved WWE Superstars of all time, he wasn't about to leave the capacity crowd feeling cheated as he walked off into the sunset yet again.

But by forcing the issue to give the fans watching *WrestleMania 29* what they wanted, Johnson put the entire *Hercules* film in jeopardy. The next day, doctors told him the damage he'd done and recommended surgery, which carried with it a one-year recovery period.

"I wasn't going to postpone the movie a year," Johnson says. "You lose the great team you assembled."

He opted for rehab and made it one week before he was back in the doctor's office with a bulbous "sausage-like" swelling jutting out of the top of his quad, which turned out to be his intestines pushing through a massive hole in his abdominal wall.

"I dropped trou, and the doctor looks and he's like, 'Wow. That's a big hernia,'" Johnson says with a laugh.

There was no escaping the surgeon's knife this time. Johnson called the studio and broke the news. Filming on *Hercules* was delayed two weeks at a cost of \$2 million to keep the talent in a holding pattern until he was ready.

A new problem for Johnson became how he could stay in *Hercules* shape when serious training was totally out of the question. Panic set in.

"The day after the surgery, he called me up and said, 'I need to get back in the gym. How can I train?'" recalls Dave Rienzi, a competitive

PREVIOUS SPREAD: KERRY BROWN; THIS PAGE: COURTESY OF DWAYNE JOHNSON

bodybuilder who serves as Johnson's strength and conditioning coach. "I was like, 'Dude. You just had triple-hernia surgery!'"

"I had six months of prep that was going incredible," Johnson says, explaining his disappointment. "The diet was coming together, the conditioning, the training...I was getting stronger as I was prepping. I was getting leaner, getting the look I wanted. Then, boom! Two torn tendons from the pelvis and triple-hernia surgery. I couldn't do anything."

He immediately dialed back all of his calories, even protein, to account for the lack of activity and each day performed a short list of lightweight upper-body isolation exercises provided by Rienzi. With bated breath, he waited for the atrophy his time off from training was sure to cause—but it never came. To his amazement, rather than lose size and start to appear soft, his muscles took on a fuller, harder look. By the time his four-week recovery was up and he stepped onto the Budapest set of *Hercules*, he was carrying a ripped 260 pounds, and could easily pass for the son of Zeus. Not even a month off could damage the work he had put in over several decades. If anything, the time to recover helped. His muscles were, in his words, "dense, grainy, survived. I reached a physical peak that I was very happy with."

It's important to remember that at the time of the Cena match, Johnson was in the middle of the final stages of preparation, using the now-famed *Hercules* workout, which he gifted to fans in five installments via social media under the hashtag #TeamHercules. The program, designed by Rienzi, is an old-school body-part split of back, chest, legs, shoulders, and arms. Rienzi explains that this split stayed intact for the entire six months of prep, but the *Hercules* workout fans now know it's just the grand finale. The volume is extremely high—it's



## THE HERCULES WORKOUT

Follow this program for 4–6 weeks.  
Add 30 minutes of cardio 3–5 times a week.

Designed by Dave Rienzi of Rienzi Strength and Conditioning in Sunrise, FL.  
Twitter: @daverienzi

intended for the final four to six weeks to elicit a physical peak—and would naturally leave anyone, even Johnson, feeling run down.

"You can't sustain that level of volume too long without overtraining," Rienzi says. Especially when you consider the type of weight that Johnson uses on every exercise. "When he does cable rows, he's using the whole stack. He is unbelievably strong."

It's plausible, then, that the intensity of the *Hercules* workout, when coupled with the breakneck pace of a full film-promotion schedule and Johnson's weekly wrestling appearances, was draining him to a degree that opened him up to the injuries he suffered in the ring that night with Cena. Looking back at the full sequence of events, Johnson says the big picture is now crystal clear.

"It was one of those injuries that had to happen," he says. "I'm not glad it did, but I can appreciate it because it forced me to slow down. It got my adrenals back working, and I became more balanced. I was carrying a full

### DAY ONE BACK

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS
Pullup	4	Failure
One-arm Dumbbell Row	4	12, 10, 8, 8
Hammer Strength Two-arm Row	4	10
Close-grip Pulldown	3	12
Seated Cable Row	3*	12
Straight-arm Rope Pulldown**	3	12
Face Pull	3	12
Heavy Dumbbell Shrug***	4	12

\*Perform each set with two drops; get 12 reps, drop the weight, and go to technical failure, then drop the weight once more and go to failure again.

\*\*Clip a rope attachment to a high cable pulley. Hold both ends and step away from the stack so that your arms are fully extended and parallel to the floor. Keeping your arms straight, engage your lats to pull the rope down to waist level.

\*\*\*Hold the last rep of each set for 15 seconds.



**AS REAL AS IT GETS**  
Fighting through injury at 'Mania 29.

wrestling schedule. I was running and gunning at a high speed and promoting *Snitch*, *G.I. Joe*, *Fast 6*, *Pain & Gain*. When you carry that type of schedule for a long period of time, your body starts to break down. You're fatigued, and your workouts aren't as good. It's hard to maintain the pump, and you're struggling with your diet because you're carb-depleted. I think that four-week period was what I needed to recover."

This instance in which a serious injury became a blessing in disguise epitomizes the real hardships of Johnson's life. He's made a habit of turning failures, by hook or by crook, into victories—and it all began in the gym. His oft-recounted tale of how his family was evicted from their home in Hawaii when he was 14 is the reason he started pumping iron and what ultimately led him to a football scholarship at the University of Miami. In turn, his injuries in college football and subsequent washout from the Canadian Football League are what led him to try his hand—like his father and grandfather—at pro

wrestling, which ultimately led to Hollywood stardom. And making the film *Tooth Fairy*—while not a failure in a financial sense but a widely panned departure from the types of roles he was born to play—led him to a new management team and turned him into franchise Viagra, immediately boosting the box-office receipts of two *Fast and Furious* films and the *G.I. Joe* sequel. His star only continues to explode: Beyond *Hercules*, Johnson will star in this fall's *Ballers*, an HBO drama in which he plays a sports superagent. Another *Fast and Furious* film is set to bow next year, as well as the earthquake-disaster drama *San Andreas*. A third *G.I. Joe* film is also expected to begin filming soon.

Where failure doesn't create a new opportunity, Johnson has become adept at living down the kind of dark moments that might define the life of a lesser man. For instance, his divorce from wife Dany Garcia in 2007, though it was followed by depression, turned into a truly amicable split. To this day they remain

**“I KNOW WHAT IT’S LIKE TO HAVE A DREAM BUT STILL STRUGGLE TO STAY ON THE RIGHT TRACK.”**

## DAY TWO CHEST

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS
Incline Barbell Bench Press	4	12, 10, 8, 6
Flat Dumbbell Bench Press	4	12
Incline Hammer Strength Press*	4	12
Flat Bench Dumbbell Flye	3	12
Cable Crossover	3	15
<b>SUPERSET W/</b>		
Dip	3	Failure

\*Begin the set with your arms locked out. Alternate arms on each rep, and get 12 reps per arm.

## DAY THREE LEGS

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS
Leg Extension	4	25
Leg Press	4	50
<b>SUPERSET W/</b>		
Walking Lunge	4	40*
Hack Squat	4	20
Romanian Deadlift	4	12
Lying Leg Curl	4	12
Standing Calf Raise	5	75
Seated Calf Raise	5	50

\*20 steps each leg

## DAY FOUR SHOULDERS

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS
Hammer Strength Shoulder Press	4	12, 10, 10, 8
Seated Dumbbell Overhead Press	3	10
Standing Lateral Raise	4*	12
One-arm Cable Lateral Raise	3	20 (each)
Machine Rear-delt Flye	4	12
Bentover Lateral Raise	4	10

\*Perform three drops on each set. Each drop should begin when technical failure is reached.



**ONE DOOR CLOSES...** Johnson played for Miami in college, but injuries prevented him from making it in the NFL.

close friends, with Garcia the head of his management team and now married to Rienzi.

Another dark moment is this lesser-known result of the eviction: It led Johnson to become part of a theft ring in Waikiki that targeted rich tourists and high-end clothing and jewelry stores.

"I got arrested around eight or nine times by the time I was 17," Johnson says. "I was constantly getting into trouble. I know what it's like to have a dream but still struggle to stay on the right track. From getting evicted from my apartment to being cut from the CFL and only having 7 bucks in my pocket, to the bouts of depression...I keep moments like that very close to me because they continue to be great motivators for me. It helps keep me grounded."

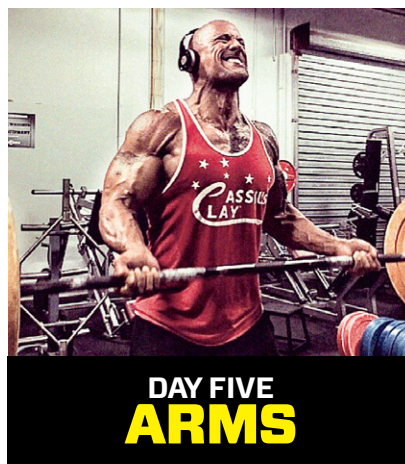
To mark the moment he was cut from the CFL, Johnson named his production company Seven Bucks Entertainment. His new show, *The Wake Up Call*, airing on TNT this fall, will follow Johnson as he attempts to make a positive impact on the lives of people who face situations similar to those of his youth.

"We all have that 7 bucks moment," says Johnson, his voice stripped of the measured preacher's cadence he uses when he cuts a wrestling promo—a gimmick that has a way of creeping into his voice when

he's promoting anything. And even though he's still promoting in a way, there's none of that now. This is raw and from the heart. "A lot of times, unfortunately, we don't have the capacity to see it through and stand up to that type of adversity. Sometimes we get our ass kicked, and we're down and we stay down. Sometimes we get depressed, and sometimes we don't know how to handle it. Sometimes we feel like it's not worth going on. I've been there. I want to share it.

"We lived in a place where we paid weekly," he says, again recalling the eviction. "You know you're getting your ass kicked when you pay weekly. I can still remember my mom crying, and I'll never forget the thought that I had: 'Well, the only thing I can do is just go build my body.' Because the men who were successful that I knew of—Stallone, Arnold, Bruce Willis—they were men of action. When I dealt with depression, there was never any medication. It was getting off my ass and being active. That was my medication."

With strength came the confidence to take risks. Johnson's initial foray into pro wrestling saw him combine the names of Rocky Johnson, his father, and Peter Maivia, his grandfather (both veteran sports entertainers). But Rocky Maivia, a good guy, didn't resonate with fans, and so Johnson recast himself as



## BICEPS

### TRISSET

Perform as a circuit, resting only after dumbbell curls.

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS
Preacher Curl w/EZ Bar	4	12
Standing EZ-bar Curl	4	12
Dumbbell Curl	4	12

## TRICEPS

### TRISSET

Perform as a circuit, resting only after dips.

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS
Rope Pushdown	4	12
Rope Overhead Extension	4	12
Dip*	4	12

\*Lean slightly back on the bars to keep your triceps emphasized.

The Rock, a trash-talking villain who verbally dismantled each of his opponents. He immediately went over with fans, gaining so much popularity that Hollywood could no longer ignore "the People's Champ."

It should be noted, too, that Johnson's decision to step out of retirement to face Cena came at a time in his career when doing so had more power to drag him down than build him up. How, exactly, could returning to an arena he had thoroughly conquered help him further his film career? If anything, going back to the ring could have stigmatized him with Hollywood producers just as he was trying to garner more serious roles. None of this, however, weighed on his mind.

His love for the pro-wrestling craft and the fans who propelled him to megastardom is real. In returning, he saw more than dollar signs. He saw a chance to give fans something they'd never seen before—the clash of two titans, both beloved by millions, with genuine, real-world animosity between them. This became its own high-wire act.

The feud took root when Cena told a crowd that The Rock was an actor who didn't truly love wrestling and had bolted for Hollywood the first chance he got. Cena, on the other hand, reasoned that he was the greater champion because he never abandoned the fans.

"It was very real," Johnson says. "When I came back, I needed something real to sink my teeth into as a performer. It got really uncomfortable for a lot of people. It gets uncomfortable for the fans—they sense something. But when it gets uncomfortable for the wrestlers

and the executives of the company, then it's something special."

Specifically, Johnson says that WWE's top brass and creative team were clueless about how the story line would play out each week because of the lack of collaboration between him and Cena. Ultimately, the execs had no choice but to trust that it would work itself out.

"What happens in wrestling is that anybody who is in a feud—everybody knows what everybody is going to say. In this case, we approached it differently. I'd say, 'John, here's what I'm going to say tonight: Go fuck yourself.' He'd say, 'Well, here's gonna be my response: Fuck you, too.' All that edge and attitude and bite—we nearly came to blows backstage and one night in the ring.

"It might've failed miserably, but in this case it worked out very well. And through that, in a crazy, weird, completely unexplained way, we became great buds."

Saying it worked out "very well" might be an understatement. The first clash between Johnson and Cena at WrestleMania 28 delivered the highest buyrate in the company's long pay-per-view history, with more than 1.2 million fans shelling out about \$60 to see it. By the time his wrestling run came to a close, he had simultaneously become Hollywood's highest-grossing star of 2013, his films raking in \$1.3 billion at the box office.

All of this set the stage for *Hercules*, the biggest bet of Johnson's career. You have to go back to the 1958 film starring Steve Reeves to find the last time movie audiences reacted positively to a live-action *Hercules*.

"I think the reason why audiences haven't responded to versions of *Hercules* in the past is because they felt that it wasn't much different from anything they've seen or known about the legend," Johnson says. "We debunk the mythology

that has followed Hercules. Not to say we don't pay homage to and honor Greek mythology—we do—but our version of Hercules is based on the power of believing in yourself and the power of faith. We show the world who Hercules was before he became a legend. It's the ideology that once you believe in who you are and who you were born to be, it can be very powerful. You don't have to be Hercules. That notion extends to everybody."

Of course, it won't hurt the film's fortunes that Johnson's physique is a living projection of the most perfect body in Greek mythology. In the end, Johnson says fans will decide just how well he prepared.

"I wanted to create a look for the character that, hopefully, had never been shown before onscreen by any actor," Johnson says, including, he adds when prodded, Arnold's portrayal of Conan.

## THE HERCULES DIET

Below is what a typical day of eating looked like during most of the six-month prep period for *Hercules*.

<b>MEAL 1</b> 10 oz filet mignon 4 egg whites 5 oz oatmeal or cream of wheat, measured dry	<b>MEAL 2</b> 8 oz chicken 2 cups white rice 1 cup broccoli	<b>MEAL 3</b> 8 oz halibut 2 cups white rice 1 cup asparagus	<b>MEAL 4</b> 8 oz chicken 12 oz baked potato 1 cup broccoli	<b>MEAL 5</b> 8 oz halibut 1 ½ cups white rice 1 cup asparagus	<b>MEAL 6</b> 8 oz filet mignon 9 oz baked potato with salad	<b>MEAL 7</b> 30 g casein protein 10 egg whites, scrambled with onions, peppers, and mushrooms
---	--	---	---	---	--	--

THE DAILY MACROS	CALORIES	PROTEIN	CARBS	FAT
	4,940	547G	469G	99G



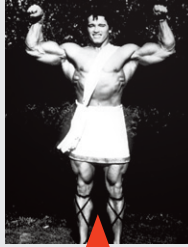


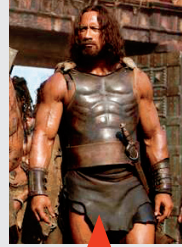
"I mean that with all due respect. Certainly, Arnold had put in time when he did *Conan*, and he set the bar very high. I felt that the difference was, the role of Hercules came around for me at a time when everything kind of came together. Being 40, having that experienced, aged muscle that can only come with

time—with decades of training hard. I'm happy to say I accomplished that look. Whether it's the look that people wanted, we can debate all of that."

What's no longer up for debate: who the world's biggest star is. That answer, forged in iron, is rock solid. **M&F**

## THE HERCULES FILM TIMELINE

Hercules movies have been hit or miss, ranging from the iconic Steve Reeves original to Kellan Lutz's stinker. Behold, the hero's screen history.

 <b>1958</b>	 <b>1961-1965</b>	 <b>1969</b>	 <b>1983</b>	 <b>2014</b>	 <b>2014</b>
<b>STEVE REEVES</b> The 1958 Italian <i>Hercules</i> didn't just set a new physique standard for sword-and-sandal action epics, it set one for physical culture as a whole and inspired an entire generation to pump iron.	<b>REG PARK</b> A childhood inspiration for our executive editor Arnold Schwarzenegger, two-time Mr. Universe Reg Park starred as Hercules in four Italian films. Park's success led Arnold to try his hand at film.	<b>ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER</b> Right at the start of his run of six straight Olympias, Arnold starred in the low-budget <i>Hercules in New York</i> , in which filmmakers billed him as Arnold Strong and even dubbed over his voice with an American actor. For comic value only.	<b>LOU FERRIGNO</b> The year after the <i>Hulk</i> TV series was canceled, Ferrigno got his shot at playing Hercules. While Ferrigno may have been the most massively muscled cinematic Hercules, the film itself is fairly unwatchable.	<b>KELLAN LUTZ</b> <i>Twilight</i> series heartthrob Kellan Lutz got extremely cut to star in this year's <i>The Legend of Hercules</i> , but the film's 3% rating on Rotten Tomatoes tells you everything else you need to know.	<b>DWAYNE JOHNSON</b> Based on the graphic novel, <i>Hercules: The Thracian Wars</i> and starring Johnson, the new film shows Herc before he was a legend, grounding the character with humanity and purpose.

EVERETT COLLECTION (5); KERRY BROWN



# Save 40-70%

Premium Home and Commercial Fitness Equipment

**Home Gyms**  
Starting at \$249

**Thousands of bars & accessories**

**Freeweights & Benches**  
Starting at \$49

**Huge inventory of Smith machines & power racks**

**Cardio Equipment**  
Starting at \$123  
Including our NEW line of CenterDrive ellipticals!

**Hundreds of treadmills, ellipticals and bikes**

**Racks/Benches**  
Starting at \$123

**#1 Source for Kettle bells & Dumbbells**



**Call 800-383-9300 or shop FitnessFactory.com**

- Fast, three-day shipping
- Lowest price guarantee
- Twelve month financing
- Gift certificates available
- Save extra on factory overstock, floor models and closeouts

Major credit cards, checks, money orders accepted. Financing available based upon credit approval. Freeweights sold separately. Free shipping on all Body-Solid equipment \$99 or more. Orders ship within three business days from date of purchase. Twelve months same as cash financing. 31-day money back guarantee. 200,000 square feet of equipment in stock, ready to ship. Descriptive or typographic errors subject to correction. Fitness Factory Outlet, 1900 S. Des Plaines Ave. Forest Park, IL 60130







