

A portrait of actor Will Smith, looking slightly to the right with a subtle smile. He is wearing a dark, collared jacket. The background is solid black.

# wiii

no special effects here. **will smith's** strong  
physique is the result of hard work and dedication

**N**ot many actors are as synonymous with special effects as Will Smith. He fought telepathic aliens in *Independence Day*. In *I, Robot*, he battled a battalion of sleek-looking machines. And in his role as unorthodox superhero in *Hancock*, he flew through the air and repelled bullets.

But if there's one thing in Smith's movies that doesn't need special effects, it's his physique.

At 41, he has shed the lanky teen look from *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* and has become a strong, fit man. But he wasn't born buff. He's proof that even celebrities have to work hard at looking good: No quick fix or fad diet will get you into shape.

Smith has tested and adopted practical ways to get—and stay—fit. His journey is a helpful guide for kicking your own fitness program into gear. The first step? Debunking myths about celebrity fitness.

**IF YOU THINK:** Will Smith doesn't have to work as hard as I do to get into shape.

**REALIZE THAT:** Smith and other celebrities spend hours a day in the gym to achieve peak fitness levels.

It's easy to think celebrities are naturally fit—that their fitness is as inherent as their beauty.

But celebrity fat cells work the same as yours and mine, says Ashley Borden, a fitness and lifestyle consultant to stars including Christina Aguilera, Mandy Moore and Tori Spelling. "Body fat doesn't care if you're a celebrity or not," she says.

by stephanie r. conner

Smith knows this all too well. A busy schedule caused him to become out of shape prior to filming *I, Robot*, a flick in which Smith's character was tasked with saving the human race. *Men's Health* reported that his body-fat percentage had gone up 2 points, and his maximum bench press had dropped by 35 pounds—not ideal conditions for the role.

Leading up to filming, his trainer, Darrell Foster, put him to work. Smith lifted weights five days a week, ran at least five miles six days a week, and boxed twice a week.

Within three months, he could bench press 385 pounds, an increase of 75 pounds. And within six months, he had reduced his body fat from 12 percent to 7.5 percent.

"When Will Smith trains ... it becomes the most important thing in life besides his family," Foster says. "It's the number-one priority.

"He enters into each training program with the mentality of a world-class athlete," he says. "Will is only interested in doing it as the best in the world—with that level of discipline and dedication."

# power

Will Smith knows what it takes to get in shape for a big role. And he isn't afraid to show off the results, as he jokingly did at the premiere of *Hancock* in 2008.

**IF YOU THINK: I'm already thin. I don't need to work out.**

**REALIZE THAT: Thin doesn't always mean fit.**

When Smith took on the role of legendary boxer Muhammad Ali, the actor was thin but out of shape, Foster told *Time* magazine. He immediately put Smith on the path to getting fit.

His workout regimen is proof that the scale doesn't necessarily matter. Smith lost 10 pounds in the beginning and dropped down to 190 pounds. By the end of his workouts, he hit 224, but this time, the gain was all muscle.

"Thin" is just a size," Foster says. "You can be thin and have 30 percent body fat—thin is only a look."

So, if it's not about being thin or a number on the scale, what *does* matter?

Many experts agree: It's about getting moving. Exercise prevents dangerous diseases and keeps your total body healthy, from your brain to your bones.

"Heart disease, stroke, diabetes and dozens of kinds of cancer are directly related to how physically active you are," says Edward M. Phillips, coauthor of *ACSM's Exercise Is Medicine: A Clinician's Guide to Exercise Prescription*.

So, where do you begin? A daily, 30-minute walk is one of the best changes you can make, Phillips says.

Of course, many of us spend our days on swivel chairs in front of computers and go home to perch on couches in front of the TV, says Felicia D. Stoler, a dietitian, exercise psychologist and host of the TLC show *Honey We're Killing the Kids*. But that's not what our bodies were designed for.

"As humans we are meant to be physically active," she says.



**IF YOU THINK: I can't achieve the peak fitness level of celebrities.**

**REALIZE THAT: It's OK to start small.**

Many people are intimidated by the big "e" word: exercise. They think of daunting gym equipment, expensive membership fees and vast time commitments. That's why it's helpful to resolve to be active rather than to exercise.

"When I'm speaking to clients, I talk about physical activity," Stoler says. "I take exercise out of the dialogue."

If the recommended 30-minute walk seems daunting, start with 10 minutes. Remember, small doses of activity are better than nothing.

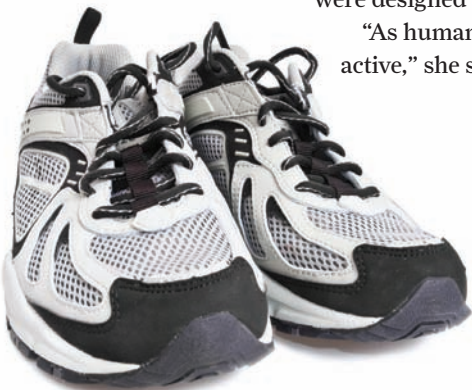
Phillips helps his patients along by giving them pedometers to track their steps. The recommended level is 10,000 steps a day.

"If you say 10,000 steps, most people will fail at that," Phillips cautions. "And they'll get discouraged, and they'll stop."

The trick is to work your way up. The first week of using a pedometer, simply write down how many steps you take, Phillips suggests. Each week after that, add 500 steps.

While celebrities have time (and get paid) to hit the gym several hours a day, you don't. That's OK; you can improvise.

"We have jobs and lives," Stoler says. "If you're watching TV, during a commercial can you do leg lifts? Can you do push-ups off the counter while you're waiting for the water to boil?"



**IF YOU THINK: I can't afford to work with a professional trainer every day.**

**REALIZE THAT: You don't need to.**

Sure, Smith can afford to hire a professional trainer to be with him every step of the way leading up to a big film, but you don't necessarily need constant supervision to reach your goals.

Meet with a trainer when you're starting a routine so that he or she can help you set up a program that will work for you. Some fitness facilities even offer free sessions for signing up. Continue to meet weekly or monthly, depending on your needs, to ensure you stay on track.

Another economical alternative to hiring someone is finding a partner. That helped celebrity trainer Borden in her own fitness goals.

"It made me more accountable," she says. Plus, you can beat workout boredom by rotating who you train with and by seeking out new activities that spark your interest and challenge your body.

Ultimately, accountability is key. Stoler says she was successful by working out with a friend at the office, someone she had to see every day.

"Getting help and sticking with that help is important," she says.

**IF YOU THINK: I've committed to a new workout plan, and I'm not going to falter.**

**REALIZE THAT: You need to be realistic, and give yourself a break.**

It's easy to set out with boundless enthusiasm, but life inevitably gets in the way. You work late, you attend dinner parties, you get tired. You need a relapse plan.

Preparing for the inevitable backslide is crucial to adopting new, healthy behaviors. When you miss a week of workouts, revisit your

values. Then, forgive yourself and start again, Phillips says.

"Try not to beat yourself up," Stoler advises. "We can be very hard on ourselves."

Even Smith, the man who makes a living defeating make-believe bad guys, knows his weaknesses. His wife, Jada Pinkett Smith, loves to bake cakes but has to limit household sweets for her husband's sake. "He has a horrific sweet tooth," she told *Shape* magazine. "If there's cake in front of him, he'll eat the whole thing!"

**IF YOU THINK: Will Smith has a good attitude about exercise.**

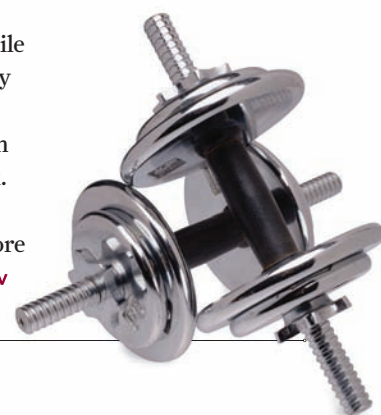
**YOU'RE RIGHT.**

Smith reached his goals by keeping the rewards in mind. It helps to remember why you want to stay in shape—whether to be able to play with your kids and grandkids, climb stairs without getting winded and or live a longer life.

"I always like to stay in shape," Smith said while filming *I Am Legend*. "I have a motto: If you stay ready, you ain't got to get ready."

Washboard abs don't appear overnight, even on celebrities; they are the result of hard work.

No matter the role he's training for, Smith is committed to his goals. "There is no greater, more dedicated individual on Earth," Foster says. **W&V**



## beyond cardio

As Will Smith knows, a workout plan is about more than cardiovascular health. Sure, running on the treadmill is great, but weight training is another important component of your program.

In addition to two hours of moderate-intensity exercise a week, adults should engage in strength training at least two days a week, according to the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

"One of the biggest myths is that the only way to lose weight is cardio," says Felicia D. Stoler, a registered dietitian, exercise psychologist and host of the TLC show *Honey We're Killing the Kids*. "But you need to build muscle mass. The more muscle mass you have, the more fat you burn."

Plus, strength training helps lower your risk for osteoporosis and helps reduce the signs of arthritis and back pain.

Ladies, you don't have to worry about bulking up. Lift a comfortable amount of weight—don't max out—and you'll get toned, not buff.

## burn, baby, burn

Want to know how many calories your favorite physical activities burn? The American Cancer Society website can tell you. Visit **cancer.org** and search "exercise counts."

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