

**train** >

# TRAIN LIKE A CAVE

To be honest, I cringed a bit when I was asked to write this article. I hate getting too caught up in fitness fads, and the Paleo diet is certainly hugely hyped at the moment! But when I thought about it more, I like the philosophy of finding the healthiest way to move, eat and live – without all the added garbage.

BY MICHELLE DRIELSMAN

Photo: shutterstock



# PALEO-EATING IS ALL THE RAGE – BUT WHAT ABOUT PALEO-TRAINING?

## MAN

**F**or those uninitiated into this health and fitness craze here's the rundown: if our caveman ancestors didn't eat it, then you shouldn't be eating it either. The idea is to eat only wholesome, unprocessed foods, a modern nutritional plan based on the presumed ancient diet of wild plants and animals that humans consumed during the Paleolithic era. This period lasted about 2.5 million years and ended around 10 000 years ago with the development of agriculture. Followers reason that our genes have barely changed in the past 10 000 years but our eating is wildly different – and that this has caused our current health problems. The contemporary Paleo diet consists mainly of fish, grass-fed pasture

raised meats, vegetables, fruit, fungi, roots and nuts, and excludes grains, legumes, dairy products, refined salt, refined sugar and processed oils.

But what about Paleo exercise? How did our ancestors keep their body's fit? You can bet it doesn't require gyms, exercise equipment, fluoro trainers, lululemon attire, expensive supplements, viewing your biceps in a mirror, kissing your guns or competing for the most pronounced washboard abs. A caveman or cavewoman would not have mindlessly pumped iron or run around in circles to spike their heart rate for the fun of it, they would have done so because their life depended on it. Paleo exercise, like Paleo nutrition, goes back to the basics.

### **Caveman Exercise: What Did They Really Do?**

1. They would have **moved around all day at a low intensity**; walking, standing, gathering, wandering, crawling, climbing. This is low-level cardio as a foundation for health, including a strong heart and blood vessels, oxygenated and well-circulating blood, strong bones and joints. They would not have sat in a car and at desks all day and later in front of the TV to relax.



2. They would have **lifted some heavy sh\*t infrequently and intermittently**, such as carrying dinner back from the hunt, carrying heavy logs and rocks for shelter, or lifted their bodyweight in a tree pull-up to reach a fruit. This high intensity, short-duration training stimulates testosterone, growth hormone and revs up the metabolism while chiselling muscles and cutting fat.
3. They would have **sprinted and jogged once in a while** to run away from animals or other cavemen. The Paleo approach claims long-distance jogging is a modern invention – but the theory of persistence hunting suggests otherwise. We are the only species that has specifically developed with the ability to jog for long distances due to our capacity to sweat while running (cooling our body temperature while other animals pant and seek shade to cool down) and to breathe faster than we can move our legs (allowing us to remain in an energy-

efficient gait). This theory suggests that out-jogging an animal is how we hunted, since we are far from being able to out-sprint any animal. Again, whether they sprinted or jogged, this would have been infrequent, not every day.

4. They would have known when to **rest and recuperate**.

I chatted to Paleo Movement King and MMA Fighter Rob Hill for his advice on the best primal exercises to mix together in a short, intense workout. As a professional MMA athlete, Rob does this for a living, and if you've ever watched MMA you will notice how primal, functional, fit and strong their bodies are required to be.

Rob says, "If you want animal-like performance and power, train like an animal! My choices of exercises can be done with minimal equipment – the key is to keep it short, infrequent, varied and intense."

## YOUR CAVEMAN WORKOUT

Perform each of these exercises for one minute before moving on to the next exercise without a rest. After you have completed one circuit, take one-minute rest and then repeat 3-5 times.



**Sprawl to Squat to Jump**  
Start in standing position. Jump into a low squat and drop to the floor with your arms and legs sprawled as quickly as possible. From here jump back into a squat and then jump forward as far as you can. Repeat.



Photo: Will Spillane





### **Bear Crawl**

Drop onto all fours with your hands in fists and placed directly under your shoulders. Rise onto your feet and crawl around in all directions.

### **Forward Tumble**

Stand with your feet together and bend forward, placing your hands on the floor in front of you shoulder-width apart. Tuck your head under and roll. When you are confident, dive into your tumbles.

### **Goanna Crawl and Leap**

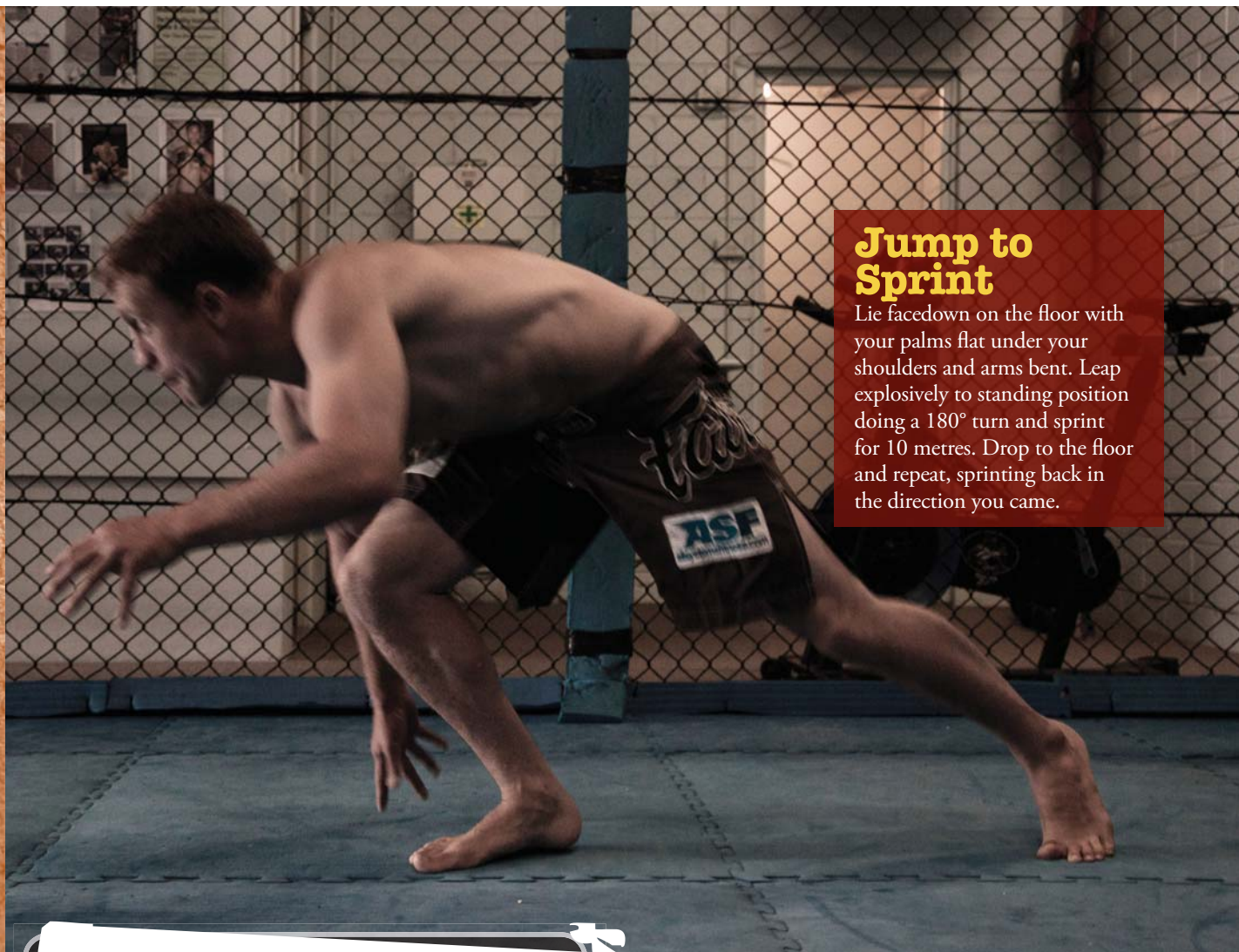
Drop onto all fours with your hands flat against the floor and come up onto your toes. Leap explosively forwards, alternating with one foot forward and one foot back (like a low lunge).

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### **Sit Out**

Get into push up position with your feet wide. Taking your left hand and right foot off the floor, rotate your body to bring your right leg out perpendicular to your left side until you are ‘sitting’ with your bum raised off the floor and supporting your weight with your right hand and left foot. Return to start position and repeat on the other side.





## Jump to Sprint

Lie facedown on the floor with your palms flat under your shoulders and arms bent. Leap explosively to standing position doing a 180° turn and sprint for 10 metres. Drop to the floor and repeat, sprinting back in the direction you came.

**Want more caveman-approved exercises? Have a go at these:**

- Sprints over short distances with obstacles
- Burpees
- Push ups
- Chin ups/pull ups
- Back bridges
- Handstand push ups and walks
- Rope climbing
- Monkey bar swings
- Hanging positional holds
- Battle ropes
- Sledge hammer swings
- Sled drags
- Tyre flips
- Medicine ball throwing and slamming
- Wrestling **UFM**

**"IF YOU WANT ANIMAL-LIKE PERFORMANCE AND POWER, TRAIN LIKE AN ANIMAL!"**

## Web Bonus!

Head to [www.ultrafitnessmag.com.au](http://www.ultrafitnessmag.com.au) to see MMA athlete Rob Hill performing this workout.

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