



MF ICON

STILL GETTING

HIS FIX >>

He's been sober for two decades, but **ROB LOWE** still gets his thrills—on dynamic waves and treacherous cliffs around the world, in the gym, and as an ever-hot actor and an emerging Hollywood mogul. And his sights are set on even more.

BY LAUREN PAIGE KENNEDY PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM WRIGHT

Shot exclusively for Men's Fitness in Malibu, Calif.

IT TAKES MORE THAN CHISELED GOOD LOOKS, EVEN THOSE AS INHUMANLY PERFECT AS

Rob Lowe's, to endure in Hollywood. The city is littered with talented has-beens, actors whose careers are (were) defined by more valleys than peaks. After three decades in the business, Lowe—teen idol, scandal-rocked star, comeback kid, comedic foil, dramatic lead—is not among them. “The people I’ve always idolized and have tried to work toward emulating,” Lowe says, “are people who stay relevant and stay in the game decade after decade after decade.”

Now, at 46, he is determined to be one of those people. Lowe goes for the laugh and milks the tears on NBC's *Parks and Recreation* and Showtime's *Californication*. He also recently signed to join the cast of the film *I Melt With You*, a thriller also starring fellow *MF* cover guys Thomas Jane and Jeremy Piven.

He's also partnered with his old pal Tom Barrack, chairman of Colony Capital, a private investment firm, to buy Miramax Films. Yes, *that* Miramax—the Disney-owned Oscar darling. His goals? To branch out into film and television production, sports, distribution, and online properties. He's also developing a reality show, *Potomac Fever*, set in the nation's capital, and penning a memoir, *Stories I Only Tell My Friends*, due out next May—a book he refused to put his name on unless he wrote every word in it.

Lowe, on-screen and off, easily pokes fun at himself, which is part of what makes an audience want to root for him. Like sunny budget-slasher Chris Traeger, his near-pathologically upbeat character on *Parks and Rec*, Lowe is a glass-half-full guy. “The ability to laugh and to make people laugh—that, and an inherent optimism—is probably one of the most important things you can have in your life,” he says.

Parks co-star Aziz Ansari praises Lowe's positive aura. “One of the great things about Rob is he is so nice and eager to share his amazing stories,” Ansari says. “This is a dude who regularly chats with Arnold Schwarzenegger! He's basically like this supercool Hollywood uncle I never had, who for some reason is also Caucasian.” (Ansari's parents emigrated from India.)



“FEAR IS LIKE A BEAR. SOMETIMES YOU PIN THE BEAR. OTHER TIMES THE BEAR PINS YOU.”

Traeger allows him to “let loose my inner geek,” Lowe says. And both are fitness fanatics. In one episode, Traeger tears open his shirt Superman style, to reveal jogging duds beneath his work attire—the character runs 10 miles daily and is trying to log as many miles as the distance to the moon. Lowe is almost as hardcore. “I do something [active] every day: surfing, skiing, playing tennis, basketball, hitting it hard in the gym, dry-sand runs with pushup intervals. I have every sort of club in my bag when it comes to what I’ll do on any given day. And I’ve been this way for years and years.”

Twenty years, if you’re counting—that’s how long it’s been since Lowe turned his back on his boozy Brat Pack ways and embraced his inner Zen. Which is not to say he went soft. If

anything, the exact opposite: The dude’s a certified thrill seeker. “I’ve been sober for 20 years,” he says. “But you gotta get your fix some way. At a certain point you realize a whole lot of espresso doesn’t do it. That’s why I like helicopter skiing”—more on this death-wish sport in a moment—“and big-wave surfing. It’s a way for me to keep my edge.”

Surfing has become “an obsession,” though he didn’t ride his first wave until he was in his 30s. Rincon Point in Santa Barbara County, a seven-mile drive from his home in Montecito, Calif., is his favorite surf spot. He’s also had “great days” in Baja, Mexico; Hawaii; and Bali. “It—has—changed—my—life,” he declares, stressing each word. “Every wave, every experience can never be replicated. And, you know, it’s dangerous!” (He says this like

it’s a happy thing.) “I’ve surfed where it’s breaking within six inches of a shallow reef. I have the scars on my back to prove it. It keeps you tough, mentally and physically. I share [surfing] with my boys as I do skiing. It’s a way to bond with them, to share life’s lessons.”

Now back to heli-skiing. A chopper drops him off among pristine powder that’s unreachable by chair lift—or anything else, for that matter. The best heli-skiing terrain is almost always avalanche country, which is why outfitters hook you up with a horn and a shovel before leaving you alone with your fate. If you’re so inclined, you might find Lowe heli-skiing in the Canadian Rockies and Utah’s Wasatch Range. Danger? “It’s part of the thrill,” Lowe says. “It’s not for everyone, but

it's the best conditions you'll ever find as a skier."

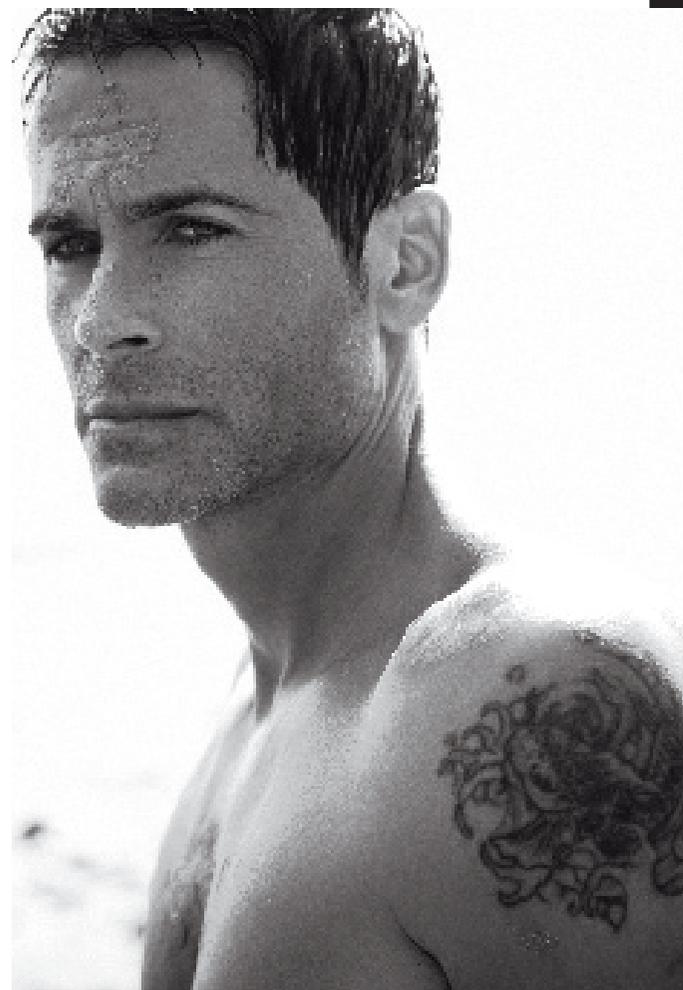
"The fear is like a bear," he reflects. "You're sort of wrestling it. Sometimes you pin the bear. Other times, the bear pins you."

Despite his passion for sports and being fit (to see how Lowe got in *MF*-cover-worthy shape, see "A New Lowe," at right), Lowe confesses to a few not-so-noble yearnings: French fries. And cheeseburgers. And pasta. "The sad truth," he laments, "is that you can work out until you're blue in the face, but if you're not eating right, it's over. I fought that one forever. I love to eat."

After a tabloid flashed his bare torso on its cover several years back with the accompanying headline "Worst Beach Bodies," Lowe knew it was time to tame his appetite. "He didn't go on a diet," says his trainer Peter Park, who also works with Lance Armstrong and a few of the Los Angeles Lakers. "He made a total lifestyle change. Rob is so disciplined; he just did it. He cut out processed foods and sugar and upped the vegetables and protein. He eats superclean now, and it shows."

"Not drinking gives me an unfair advantage," Lowe says, chuckling, during our telephone chat. "I just try to stay away from the carbs, unless it's after a workout. But I don't make myself crazy. I'm in Italy right now"—Lowe is taking a much needed break after wrapping a season of doing three shows simultaneously, even if he does apologetically interrupt our interview to take a big call about his potential Miramax deal—"and I'm a pasta-eating fool! It's no time to be a hero."

Just time to attack the next transition, whatever it may be. **MF**



THE WORKOUT

A NEW LOWE



Peter Park, the official strength and

conditioning coach for Tour de France giant Lance Armstrong, also works with Lowe "to take it to the next level" when it comes to fitness. Park's gym, Platinum Fitness, is based in Montecito, Calif., just a short distance from Lowe's home. "It started with the tabloid thing," Park says, referring to Lowe's brief run-in with a spare tire around his waist a few years back. "It wasn't just about vanity. He was always very active. But as you get older you have to work harder to stay lean."

Park says that when Lowe first weighed in two years ago, the 5'10" actor was 172 pounds and sported 17% body fat. "Now he weighs 160 pounds with 10% fat. It's been a real transformation." The trainer started with a nutrition overhaul. "It was 70% diet," Park maintains. "Too much pizza, too many hamburgers! Now I tell him he can have the occasional cheat day as long as he's watching it the rest of the time. He stays away from bread. But the biggest thing is portion control, which he's finally on top of."

Lowe's also hitting the gym—hard. The actor lifts weights and does circuit training three days a week, along with "intense cardio" two or three days a week. Cardio might include riding his bike at top speed for 20-minute intervals or sprinting on the treadmill. Here are a few of Lowe's favorite moves, guaranteed to give results.

ONE-LEGGED PISTOL SQUAT

HOW TO: Stand with your legs shoulder-width apart and then raise your right leg in front of you as high as you can. Bend your hips and left knee and lower your body as far as you can. Repeat with left leg.

SETS: 3-5, REPS: 5 (PER LEG)

ONE-ARM SNATCH

HOW TO: Hold a dumbbell or kettlebell in one hand and set up as you would to perform a deadlift—feet about hip-width apart and your lower back in its natural arch. Explosively straighten your hips and knees and pull the dumbbell straight up in front of your body until it is about chest level. Now quickly flip your wrist up to face the ceiling and extend your arm straight overhead.

SETS: 5-10, REPS: 7-10 (PER ARM)

TURKISH GET-UP

HOW TO: Hold a dumbbell or kettlebell in one hand and lie down with your back flat on the floor. Extend the weight straight over your head. Then, all you've got to do is stand up, keeping the weight perpendicular to the floor and over your head the entire time you're getting up. Switch the arm that holds the weight on each set.

SETS: 3, REPS: 3-5 (PER SIDE)

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