

# The male

# SEX

irst there was HBO's *Sex and the City*, a pop-culture juggernaut that introduced an era of designer stilettos as foreplay. Next came the blockbuster film in 2008. Now, the sequel opens this June. Among fans of all three, actor Jason Lewis—who has played Jerry “Smith” Jerrod since season six of the series—inspires a kind of breathless, *can anyone be this hot?* sort of disbelief. Lewis personifies sex on a show about sex. He's the one man who—almost—drives “try-sexual” Samantha Jones (she'll try anything once, her character says) to monogamy.

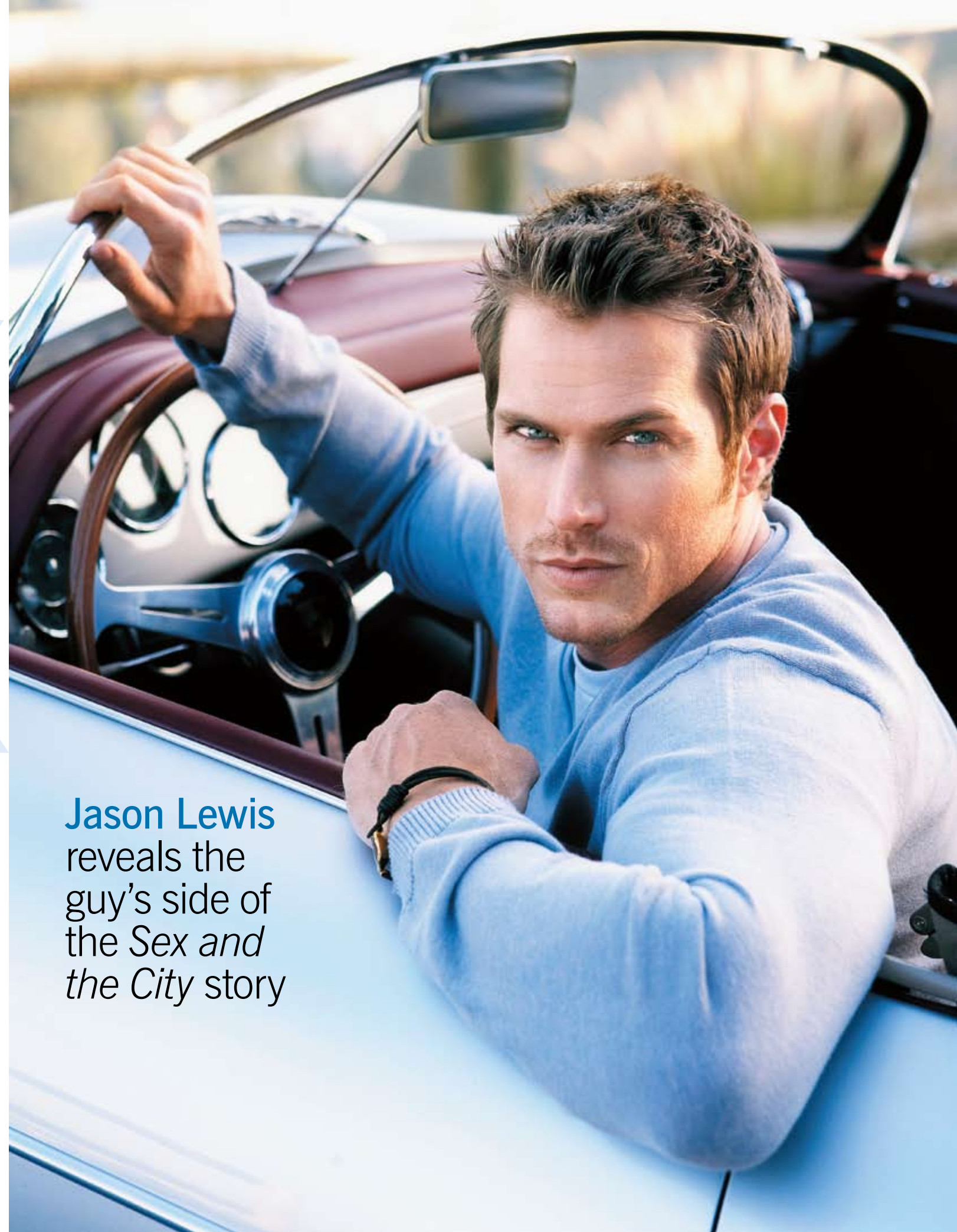
WebMD tracked down Lewis, 39, one sunny day in Venice, Calif., to explore the ins and outs of modern love, and to check in on the latest *SATC2* drama and his role in it. He begs off sharing plotlines: “I hate reading spoilers!” Still, there are clues out there: The movie trailer depicts Carrie and company strolling across sand dunes. “All I'll say,” hedges Lewis, “is that I *did* go on location, and the place has the most delicious dates.”

“Dates” as in fruit, WebMD asks? Not outings with local kohl-eyed beauties? “Right.” He confirms the first guess, those iconic ocean-blue eyes lit with mischief. This tells *SATC* fans two things: Smith is indeed returning to the fab four's world,

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Jason Lewis reveals the guy's side of the *Sex and the City* story

JOHN RUSSO/CORBIS OUTLINE



“You make yourself so exposed to someone, and they can bring your world crashing down... I am a hopeless romantic.”

despite Samantha's much-debated speech that sent him packing in the first film. (More on this in a moment.) But what exactly these confirmed New York gals are doing in the Middle East, Lewis isn't saying.

Instead, WebMD chats him up about other pursuits. On paper, the actor seems to embody a Hollywood type: California boy turned male model turned sex symbol. But here's the surprise: He may be famous for doing love scenes, but in real life Lewis is ruled by many personal passions, some of them downright unexpected.

### Love Lessons

Before Lewis opens up about his love affair with the water, shares his latest creative and philanthropic endeavors, or offers advice for finding romance (even as a never-married man pushing the big 4-0), WebMD asks what he's learned about women by portraying Smith on SATC.

“A lot,” he laughs. “When I first landed the role, I watched all five seasons back to back over one weekend. It was plenty to digest! But the show does what good storytelling is supposed to do: It offers a voice and a platform. And not just for

women, or from a woman's point of view... The biggest discrepancy I had with Smith was during the episode when he's downstairs listening to Samantha having sex with her ex-boyfriend. I was prepared to play it all pissed off, but the director was like, ‘No, you need to be light and free and open.’ And I was like, ‘Huh? Why?’ But Smith comes from a place where he simply wants to care for someone who's hurting. Sucks for me, though, because now women have certain expectations because of him. He's tough to live up to!”

What does Lewis make of Samantha's infamous kiss-off in the first film that set blogs ablaze last year? (For those who missed the movie, she broke up with Lewis' character with the following soliloquy: “I'm gonna say the one thing you aren't supposed to say: I love you. But I love me more. I've been in a relationship with myself for 49 years, and that's the one I need to work on.”)

Is Samantha being selfish? Or is her message to women empowering?

“Neither,” says Lewis. “[Executive Producer] Michael Patrick King follows the truth of his characters. He's written Saman-



tha all these years to be just that. So why are we surprised when she needs it”—it being sex without commitment—“in her life?”

Leslie Becker-Phelps, PhD, clinical psychologist and expert on WebMD's Sex & Relationships Exchange, weighs in on the discussion: “‘Selfish’ is the wrong word,” she says. “It can be empowering for anyone—man or woman—to recognize one's needs are not being fulfilled within a relationship. What makes it constructive or destructive is the context. If you cut ties with a supportive person, you might be cutting out something healthy—and you may have a lot to lose. And you have to be prepared for the consequences of that loss.

... It boils down to the individual, who must be able to look at herself in the mirror and say: ‘I want multiple partners’—or whatever it is that's missing. If you're OK with your choices and the consequences of them, that's all that matters.”

Actress Kim Cattrall plays Samantha with va-va-va-voom naked aplomb. How does Lewis feel about filming all those over-the-top love scenes before a crew of clothed colleagues? Is it ever, well, normal? “No,” he admits. “But as actors we're in service to the story. Ideally you've read the script before you accept the part, right? So you know what you've gotten yourself into. You just need to get yourself out of the way.”

Lewis has had high-profile pairings in real life. He famously dated actor Rosario Dawson, a relationship that ended after two years in 2006. “You make yourself so exposed to someone, and they can bring your world crashing down. ... I am a hopeless romantic and very much believe those experiences are few and far between. But I don't need to put someone in that spot. I won't get married just to satisfy the goal of marriage. ... I'll know when I'm floored by the next girl. ... Love doesn't happen under your own expectations. It never fits into a pretty box.” So yes, Lewis—who is rarely mentioned in the press without clarifiers such as hunk, stud, or hottie—is single. But if you intend on catching his eye, WebMD has one bit



Lewis on *Brothers & Sisters* and *House*

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: NEW LINE CINEMA/EVERETT COLLECTION; CHRIS HASTON/EVERETT COLLECTION; RON TOMNEY/EVERETT COLLECTION

## LEWIS ON LOVE

### The SATC2 star talks romance

Apparently, it's a jungle out there even for former male models with thriving Hollywood careers. “I'm 39 and still single! I shouldn't be giving advice on relationships,” laughs Lewis. “Romantic relationships are the most difficult thing to do in life,” he says.

“Match the chemistry to the mentality, then add good timing to that. It's hard to find. When we feel vulnerable we go into defense mode, and nothing makes you feel more vulnerable than love.”

WebMD's Sex & Relationships Exchange Expert Leslie Becker-Phelps, PhD, clinical psychologist, agrees with this sentiment. In fact, she's plenty impressed with the actor's approach to finding a meaningful, loving connection. Below, she comments on his romantic musings:

#### ► On meeting the right person:

“Try to be as honest with yourself as you can be.”

**Becker-Phelps:** “You first need to look in the mirror, psychologically speaking. Because we all have blind spots, it's also wise to listen to feedback about yourself from people you trust. Only by knowing yourself can you truly know whether you are making a healthy choice in a partner.”

#### ► On “blind” love:

“Take the expectations off the person in front of you, and see the person for who they really are.”

**Becker-Phelps:** “The more you know about your emotional needs and vulnerabilities, the better chance you have to recognize when you are projecting your desires, fears, or expectations on your partner. However, those incredibly intense feelings people have when they fall in love often override clear thinking. When that happens, the in-love feeling will eventually run its course, leaving you—for better or worse—with a real relationship.”

#### ► On deal-breakers:

“I'm nobody's daddy.”

**Becker-Phelps:** “While most people have fantasies of all their emotional needs being filled effortlessly, these are just fantasies. Healthy relationships are a collaborative effort, which works toward meeting both people's needs. If you assume the role of a knight in shining armor or a princess who needs pampering, then the foundation of your relationship is an illusory one that will end in unhappily ever after.”

#### ► On remaining independent:

“Maintain your own interests. Be your own person.”

**Becker-Phelps:** “If you lose yourself in someone else, then it's unhealthy for you because you are no longer being authentic. This will also prevent you from being able to genuinely and intimately relate to the other person. In the end, any possibility for a healthy relationship will be doomed.”



of advice: Be prepared to perspire. And if you feel self-conscious in a swimsuit, you might want to look elsewhere.

## Action Star

A natural athlete, the Newport Beach, Calif. native says: "If it involves sweat and adrenaline, I'll probably want to do it." His personal trainer Brandon Lees elaborates: "Jason is incredibly active. He surfs, mountain bikes, snowboards ... his training is not only to increase his performance, but to prevent injury." Last fall Lees introduced the actor to TRX suspension training, a portable exercise system created by a former Navy Seal. "I can do it in my hotel room," Lewis says of his workout on the compact exercise equipment, which leverages one's own body weight to engage the core and to increase joint mobility.

But the ocean is where Lewis prefers to flex his muscles. Surfing, sea kayaking, scuba diving, and swimming are his first

loves, and these have indirectly led him to his latest philanthropic effort: helping amputees learn to surf through Operation Amped ([www.operationamped.com](http://www.operationamped.com)).

He explains why: "My buddy Mark, someone I've known since I was 25, lost his leg last year in an accident. He needed some support. So I moved him into my house as my roommate. Then I met another guy with a similar above-the-knee amputation who was using a new mechanical knee prosthetic—and he could surf! So I wanted to get these two together. A whole group of us went to Hawaii, and the idea was to get Mark back into the warm water and into life. ... It was great. By day three he was sitting on top of his board and totally

riding the waves. And I thought, I'd like to do more of this."

So the actor is getting into the water with others who've lost limbs—people who yearn to remain active, including returning Iraqi war veterans. His pal Mark is giving back, too: He's a trained chef, and during his tenure in the Lewis household he's seasoned the kitchen with a whole new level of cooking. Lewis has always been into healthy nutrition—when he was growing up, his family had "a two-acre farm in the middle of Long Beach" and he "planted my own garden and canned my own jellies with my grandmother"—but now he and Mark swap recipes.

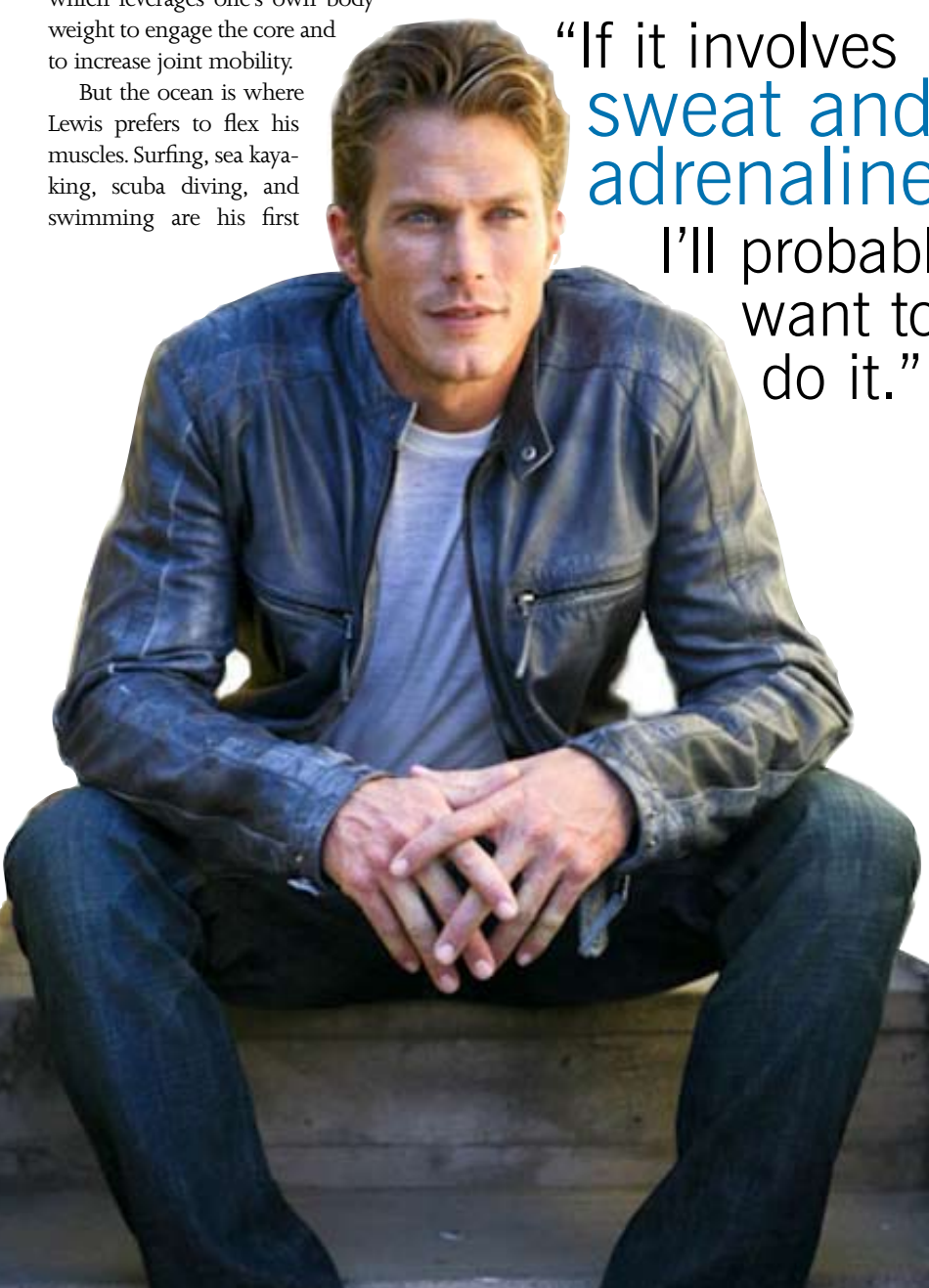
## Puppy Love

For now Lewis has found true love with his hunting dog, a Rhodesian ridgeback named Beqa (pronounced "Benga," after an island near Fuji where the actor once filmed), who, at 13, still regularly takes five-mile hikes with him. "Dogs just bring out that decency in you—plus, they're yummy to hug."

The career is going well, too. Lewis finished a two-year stint on the ABC television drama *Brothers & Sisters*, where he played a closeted gay man—and engaged in some groundbreaking (for network TV) make-out sessions with co-star Matthew Rhys—in 2009. And now he's assuming a new identity. He's just completed a pilot, *Rio*, produced by the team behind the TV series *Las Vegas*. If it gets picked up, he'll move to the Brazilian city for six months out of the year.

"I'm already studying Portuguese," he says. "Plus the lifestyle there suits me fine. I'll do a lot of surfing!" While he waits to hear if a relocation to Rio de Janeiro is imminent, there are plenty of other obligations to distract him. In addition to hitting the beach, where, he tells WebMD, he's heading to meet a pal the minute this interview wraps, there's the upcoming publicity machine behind *SATC2*—attending premiere parties, giving television interviews, and hanging with Sarah Jessica Parker and the rest of the gang.

It must be hard to be Jason Lewis. But don't hate him because he's beautiful. ■



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 Find more men's healthy living tips at [WebMD.com](http://WebMD.com).