

## **“Pain Heals. Chicks Dig Scars. Glory... Lasts Forever”**

**By Conor Walsh**

As most of you know, my main focus has been on my physical wellness, alongside my mindfulness. Frankly, as much work as I have been putting into this challenge, I've recently felt like it has not been enough. So, once again, I am making some changes to hopefully better improve my efforts. Ever since I really started actively looking into my fitness and diet last summer, I have seen advertisements for V Shred (thanks Zuck. Big Brother is watching!). V Shred is another one of those programs that promises results if you stick by their fitness and diet program. They also offer a number of supplements and a whole lot of other things for support. After months of clicking “skip ad” and trying to blow right past it, I finally decided to look into it more. After some further research and long thought, I enrolled in the V Shred “Get Ripped in 90 Day” Program. I wanted to add another level of accountability to myself, while also receiving a little more guidance in my efforts. For those who are unaware of how it works, you create an account and you can access your program online, either on your computer and your smartphone. Also, they have workouts which adjust to whether you are able to go to a gym or if you're doing a home workout. I pretty much rarely leave the house unless it's for errands anymore because the pandemic sucks, winter sucks, everything su- I digress! So, with that logic, my workout plan is geared around more calisthenics, kind of like what I've already been doing, but on crack.

I have only been on the program since Monday, but I can tell you that it is kicking my ass! I start off my workouts the same way that I did before, with all these different stretches, and a light jog or a bunch of jumping jacks. Then I get into whatever the program tells me to do for the day. What is really helpful is that there are instructional videos that go along with each exercise to help you do it correctly. Now, I've known or at least heard of most of these exercises, but I appreciate having the visual and verbal instruction to ensure I am not going to hurt myself like I did at the beginning of “That First Step.” Let me tell you guys, these workouts are a lot, at least for me. Everything that

I have been doing for the past two months did not prepare me for this. The program is expecting much more sets and reps than I was doing, and its getting much more to the core of the strength training rather than my passive technique. Again, I never said my technique was great, I was just trying to figure it out as I go along. But holy cow, this is beating me up, in a good way! Yeah, I may have cried a little today during my workout, but I did my best to push through it. It is obvious to see that I am not to the point where I can do all the sets and reps easily. I will admit I struggle a lot through them, find myself inadvertently cheating at times, and needing a second to catch my breath or relieve my muscles. I have honestly fallen on my face or on my back several times now from my arms or legs just giving out on me. Again, I am not looking to kill myself with this, but it is clear to see I was not doing enough prior.

Now, how does this tie into my mental health and wellness? It is about time. And I talk a little bit about this concept on Walsh Wednesday this week, so I recommend hopping over there at some point, too. Recently, time has not been my own. As many of you know by now, I used to be the caregiver for my grandmother before I was able to move her into an assisted living facility. Since moving her in, I don't have to be over every day anymore, but I still do her errands, sort a lot of paperwork, and take her to doctor's appointments. Most of the time, this has gotten pretty easy to balance. That is, when hell isn't freezing over and we are bombarded with snow storm after snow storm! If you haven't noticed, I despise the winter. One storm doesn't equal one snow day for me, it takes about two or three days to catch up. With these storms, I am reorganizing my schedule, and I have been rescheduling all these appointments for my grandmother, and trying to keep that under control. Besides that, my uncle and cousin recently were diagnosed with Covid. Fortunately, they are doing much better and on the mend, but I stepped up and would do medicine and grocery runs for them. On top of that, I would go down to help my mom with errands and various chores at her parents house, where she is the caregiver for them. I have done groceries, shovelled, laid salt, and more. Now, I don't mind doing this stuff for family, but some days I am driving all over Poughkeepsie to then drive all over Fishkill to then drive all over Poughquag and Beekman. And on top of

all that, I'm running Walsh Wednesday, That First Step, general freelancing jobs, a few other to-be-announced projects, and still take care of the house. I'm the primary cook for my family, and a lot of nights, right after dinner, I'm running off to some project or online appointment and the dishes pile up, which gets very intimidating.

All of this takes up so much time. I am doing my best to balance as much as I can, but a number of things are falling to the wayside. In regard to Walsh Wednesday, I don't get to sit down and edit those until 8-9pm Tuesday night before it's supposed to be up around midnight. I haven't been able to dedicate much time to other behind the scenes projects that require my time. The dishes continue to pile up. And That First Step starts looking like an unessential thing that I can take off my plate to leave room for other things. Since I don't technically have a typical "9-5 job" and I can "make my own schedule," I have become the go-to for a lot of situations. That being said, I'm being stretched thin, and my personal responsibilities are falling through. There are a number of days recently I haven't been able to do any of my work, and it is all piling up. Some days, it gets very daunting, and I feel like I'm accomplishing nothing.

Once again, this is why I am doing "That First Step!" It is not just for the goal to workout and meditate, but it is for my physical and mental wellness. That applies to all facets of my life. And that is why I stay true and accountable for all this. Regardless of the chaos surrounding me, focusing on me is a priority, and I must keep it that way. In regard to my physical wellness, it takes up so much time to dedicate to all that I should be doing. Exercising takes about an hour and a half. Preparing, cooking, and eating all my meals takes at least another hour per meal. Heck, even getting ready for the day takes another hour! So, if I'm supposed to get the proper 8-9 hours of sleep, I am up for 15 hours a day. And according to that logic, with all I just listed, there goes about at least 5 ½ hours! Put that on top of all the other chores and errands I have been doing to keep everything else afloat, trying to fit in any of my own work is quite daunting!

Some of y'all may say I have the first obligation to me, and that I come first and that I should leave it to others to stand up. Unfortunately, everyone else is hindered, handicapped, and busy with something else, there is no one else. Everyone already has so

much on their plate, so me being young and expendable, I come in handy in a number of situations. It is tiring. But one thing I can do is really analyze and understand my schedule. Some days are going to be crazier than others. Some days will have a few unexpected twists and turns. I can't plan out for every possible variable, but I need to block out the time to get things done. I got to say, "Okay, I can make that happen, but I also need to prioritize this," or something along those lines. There are only so many hours in a day, but I have to live with the thought that I have many days to accomplish this all in. Should everything go well and nothing horrific happens, I should hopefully have a long life to fulfill all these things. Rome was not built in a day. I should not pick at myself for not being further along. I need to give myself credit for the things that I am doing. Mindfulness is more than spending about 20 minutes meditating, it is about taking that awareness and stability into my everyday life. I hate the feeling of falling behind, hence why it is so important to find ways to chisel at things a little each day, regardless of how difficult that is. I am one of those people where I work until it is done; however, many of the things I want to do cannot be completed in just one night. Hence why if I keep chiseling away at things a little each day, whether that be exercise, Walsh Wednesday, or other projects, I'll be amazed at where I go in no time.

That being said, I few things to try to accomplish tonight. Much love to you. Keep stepping!