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We've got fitness inspiration from Halle Berry's trainer

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Oscar-winner and Instagram-fitness-star Halle Berry with trainer Peter Lee Thomas. (Riker Bros.)

In most of Peter Lee Thomas' conversations, the question invariably sneaks in: What's it like training Oscar-winner Halle Berry?

"People want to know how she gets into that kind of shape," said Thomas of the 52-year-old actress who seems to age in reverse. "It's perplexing to them."



The fitness trainer who specializes in mixed martial arts was fielding those questions again during his appearance as part of Skytalk, a series of events at the Line Lofts in Hollywood featuring speakers from a variety of fields, including social activism, fashion and fitness. The Chicago-born Thomas, 35, has been training Berry for years, working out with her several times a week, and making regular appearances in her Instagram feed. Now he's training her for "Bruised," a film in which she plays an MMA fighter. (He teaches *kyokushinkarate* — a full-contact version of the sport that he says helps make the body "an indestructible machine.")

He says he got his interest in health from his Polish great-grandmother, who used to brew kombucha in her basement long before it was a thing.

"They didn't know what it was called," said Thomas. "She was a medicine woman in the village and she'd give people this drink. I guess the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. From a young age, I had this curiosity in health. I'd be outdoors all day, riding a bike or climbing trees. Becoming a trainer was a natural progression."



Halle Berry and trainer Peter Lee Thomas work on abs. (Riker Bros.)

Thomas said there's no secret to Berry's phenomenal physique — yes, you can try to look like her, but expect to work really, really hard for it. Instead, he encourages you to find your own unique fitness style: You might find that boxing can be a pleasant surprise.

Here's what he told us:

Hard-core exercise isn't for everyone

In order to see a major difference in the body, there's no way around hard work. Unfortunately, a lot of people are just about their feelings on the surface — they don't feel like exercising or eating healthy. But who does? It's all about the mental attitude, and getting on with it. With Halle, she has the drive and tenacity. She shows up and looks at working out as something that has to be done and she doesn't hold back. Sometimes, it sucks and it hurts. It can scare a lot of people. But at the same time, not everybody can jump up and down and do plyometrics and bang their joints around. So find something else that fits you.



Halle Berry and trainer Peter Lee Thomas at work burning calories. (Riker Bros.)

Where to start? Walking

Walking is the biggest thing you can do to get used to the idea of exercise. First start on flat ground, maybe around a park, easy, no crazy turns. Then, take the next step and walk on the beach where you have a little bit of resistance. And then, try walking on an incline, maybe a trail where you have to balance your body and pay attention to your surroundings.

Pick an eating plan you can sustain

It doesn't matter if it's Paleo, Ketogenic, Atkins, South Beach — as long as it's something that you can sustain. I think that's the missing link. People walk into a health food store where there is an abomination of products and they get lost and overwhelmed and end up buying a packet of potato chips.

Do the math

Add something, subtract something. Start there. People wake up and go straight to tea or coffee. But having that first drink of water in the morning is really essential. And take out the bad stuff: all the synthetics and processed food that's made in a lab and not in a kitchen. Eat foods that nature intended you to eat, and in line with the seasons.

Bounce around

Take 30 days and visit every single health club or gym you can get to. A lot of them offer free trial classes. Try different yoga studios, spin classes, boxing, cardio, and see what resonates. There are classes based on the moves of Cirque du Soleil; it looks intimidating, but if it's taught the right way, it's amazing. Or people are petrified of boxing, but then say they had no idea they could do that. You get bit by the bug. And just think of the great shape you'll be in after 30 days.