

www.chicagotribune.com/health/la-he-5q-jackman-20140524,0,5917536.story

# chicagotribune.com

## 5 QUESTIONS

### Hugh Jackman talks about how he gets into Wolverine shape

James Fell

6:30 PM CDT, May 23, 2014

Wolverines are some of the nastiest creatures on the planet, making honey badgers look like advertisement golden retriever puppies. Actor Hugh Jackman is the opposite of a wolverine in terms of temperament, but when it comes to his workout regimen to prepare for his recurring role as *the* Wolverine for the just-released "X-Men: Days of Future Past," Jackman needs to unleash the beast and let the testosterone flow freely. How does one become qualified to carry blades of adamantium? Answer: Lift heavy stuff.

#### **How does life change for you when it's time to get into Wolverine shape?**

It's too hard to get in shape from scratch, and it's easier to stay in shape than to get in shape. ... For Wolverine I really up the training. Right now I do about an hour of training a day and ride my bike everywhere. But I do about 2 1/2 hours of training a day when getting ready for the role, and foodwise I eat more, but I eat a lot stricter. Seventy percent of your physique is your diet, and diet is the biggest change that happens.

#### **Describe some of the details of your Wolverine workout regimen.**

I do heavy weights in the morning for about an hour, and then I do 45 minutes of higher-volume lifting in the afternoon. My least favorite is the legs. ... I do quite a few chin-ups and rows. I do mostly old-school lifting with a lot of squats. I actually do more front squats than I do back squats, and I do a lot of deadlifting. If I could only do one exercise, it would be deadlifting. For cardio, I dance, I ride my bike, I run and I have kids. There is a ... lot of cardio just from being a parent.

When lifting I'm always with a trainer because the thing that makes a difference is that last 20% in your training, and he very scientifically looks after my food as well, because when I'm going for a "shirt off" shot, everything changes the month before, and I'm timed down to the day. There is water dehydration for 36 hours before. It's quite a scientific process to looking your best.

#### **And what about playing the role itself? I'd imagine that's a workout on its own.**

It's absolutely physically demanding to play the role of Wolverine. There's a lot of action, and I try to do as much of it as I can because it's better for the audience. You don't just have to look physically in shape; you really have to be mobile and be able to fight and jump and do wire work and stuff like that. The training has to be functional. Of course, you want to look a certain way, but to me the look is more about him being animalistic than just looking buff.

**You have a Broadway show coming up. Does the added muscle interfere with that?**

Yes, it does, and when I dance I drop muscle very quickly. The body is very smart and efficient, and a traditional dancer's body is not going to be bulked up on top because they're muscles that you don't really need. And your body is constantly going for the most efficient way to do something. A sprinter's body is very different from a long-distance runner's body.

**You're well known as a dedicated family man. Does a desire to look good for your wife help motivate you to train hard?**

Of course, but my wife is not so much like that. She says, "Will you stop all this body obsession? I'm the one who is supposed to be looking good." She also says, "The best thing about being married to an actor is that I get to have an affair every few months." It's a different kind of look all the time. But I've got to be honest, mate, being in a 3-D film on a 40-foot screen is pretty good motivation for being in shape.

*Fell is a certified strength and conditioning specialist and founder of [sixpackabs.com](http://sixpackabs.com).*

[health@latimes.com](mailto:health@latimes.com)

Copyright © 2014, [Los Angeles Times](http://www.latimes.com)