

A full-page photograph of Liam Hemsworth in a yellow polo shirt and dark pants, crouching on a skateboard on a paved road. He is wearing sunglasses and has a dragonfly tattoo on his left arm. The background shows a rocky, hilly landscape under a clear blue sky.

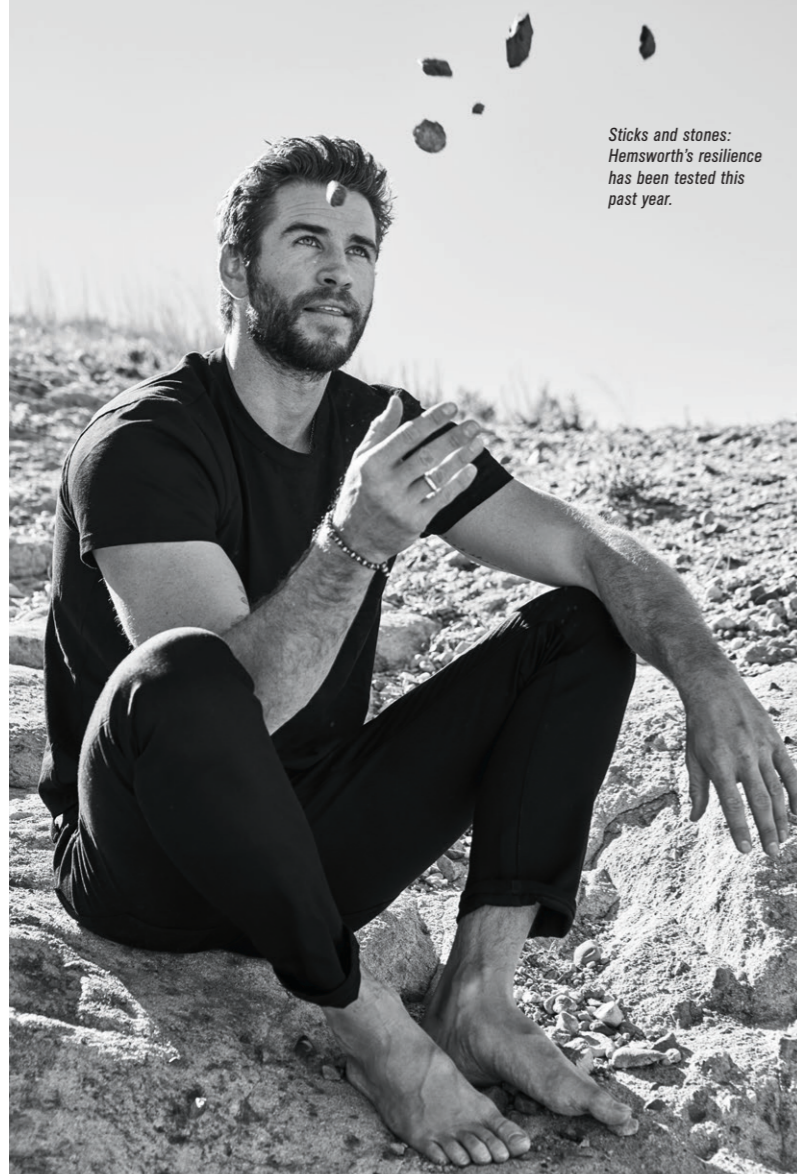
LIAM HEMSWORTH

RE SURG ENCE

As he enters his 30s, Liam Hemsworth is on a roll that's rapidly gathering pace and keen to put the trials of the past decade behind him. I ask him straight up if his focus is on rebuilding. "Rebuilding?" Hemsworth leans back and laughs his booming Hemsworth laugh, contemplating the idea. "Yeah, that's a good way to put it" >

BY SCOTT HENDERSON PHOTOGRAPHY BY THE RIKER BROTHERS

Sticks and stones:
Hemsworth's resilience
has been tested this
past year.



“I’M REALLY TOUGH,”

says a barefoot Liam Hemsworth as we near the end of the unpaved trail at the top of Corral Canyon, California. He’s rebuffing another offer to borrow my shoes. He’s been barefoot for the past 45 minutes of our hike, so he’s definitely earned some rubber-cushioned relief. But as I look back down the trail behind me, I’m 80 per cent sure he’s not just talking about his feet. My gaze is met by that trademark Hemsworth grin and my suspicions are all but confirmed. “I can take anything.” Make that 90 per cent sure.

While delivered tongue firmly in cheek, the statement rings truer than you might imagine. This is a man who, despite a string of movie hits and swift rise to global superstardom, has more recently seen the core pillars of his life crumble around him.

In the past two years alone he’s seen his

Malibu home destroyed in 2018’s wildfires, suffered a serious health scare and subsequent hospitalisation and, just a week before our hike, signed papers in one of the most highly-publicised divorces in Hollywood history – a decade-long relationship reduced to emotionally wrought, if largely forgettable, pop lyrics.

Yet here he is, high up in the Malibu Hills, a picture of health, filled with a boundless energy. He’s emerged from his 20s more than fine. He can take anything.

INDEPENDENCE DAY

Only two short hours earlier, a very different Liam Hemsworth greeted me by the beach in Malibu. It’s midday on an unseasonably warm LA winter’s day and I’m just a short ride away from Hemsworth’s beachside home-

come-bachelor-pad when I spot him across an empty car park. Inappropriately dressed in an oversized Sherpa jacket and jeans, he’s unmistakably a leading man, even with oversized sunglasses shielding his famous blue eyes.

Anticipation of an afternoon spent hiking the Malibu Hills together is high . . . at least on my part. I approach Hemsworth, arm outstretched for a handshake, only to be left hanging. It’s a dent to my ego and temporarily dampens my excitement. “I’m not touching today,” says Hemsworth, his hands remaining firmly in his jacket pockets. He does, however, contort his arms toward my outstretched hand, resulting in an awkward, but very memorable, elbow bump. ‘Oh shit’, I think to myself mid elbow graze, fearing the worst. ‘The jacket, the touching . . . he’s gone full Hollywood.’

As if sensing my panic, Hemsworth immediately jumps on the defensive. He wants me to know that he hasn’t turned into a ‘don’t-look-me-in-the-eye’ diva who only eats the yellow M&Ms and must only be photographed from the left. The reality is Hemsworth is staring down an event-packed Oscars’ weekend with a severe case of flu and doesn’t want to pass it on to our crew. In fact, he’s in the kind of condition that would cause many lesser men to cancel a sweaty afternoon hike with *Men’s Health* in favour of Netflix and a pill. (Full credit to Hemsworth: what was odd in the moment is now commonplace in the time of COVID-19. In hindsight, he was ahead of his time.)

As we climb aboard his giant black SUV and begin winding our way up an empty dirt road, away from the beach and into the mountains, I feel guilty for even momentarily doubting his authenticity. It’s clear that the Aussie larrikin in Hemsworth is alive and well. In fact, he’s probably only a casual C-Bomb away from being back on the beach in Byron Bay. “I feel like there was a period of time where I almost felt like I was losing it, the Aussie part,” he tells me of his early days in Hollywood, further diffusing the absurdity of our introduction.

It’s been a huge period of transition for the Hollywood A-Lister and the past few months alone give us plenty to talk about on the narrow Malibu roads. The end of a long-term relationship and beginning of a new decade would give any young man cause to reflect on life, albeit without global media scrutiny. It’s safe to say it’s been a period of upheaval that’s taken a visible toll on the youngest Hemsworth, although his weariness is perhaps more a symptom of his flu than the highly-publicised dramas he so actively tries to avoid inflaming.

“I’m just appreciating everything that

happens to me,” says Hemsworth on lessons learnt during his 20s, and in particular, the last six months. “Appreciating the little things. I think it’s something I always try to remind myself to do. Especially in times when maybe things aren’t going the way I planned or the way I wanted things to go.”

The recent dramas are a sharp contrast to the way he began his Hollywood career. The truth is, the odd glitch aside, things largely went well for Hemsworth after arriving in Tinseltown as a fresh-faced 19-year-old. “I feel like at the time I had a really naive confidence about it all. I was sure that I was going to come over here and then I was going to get work.”

Despite an infamous audition for *Thor*, a role that ultimately landed on brother Chris’ broad shoulders, it didn’t take long for success to arrive for Hemsworth, his youthful self-confidence paying big dividends. “I was here for three months before I got a job,” he says. “And from then on I sort of jumped from film to film for a few years.”

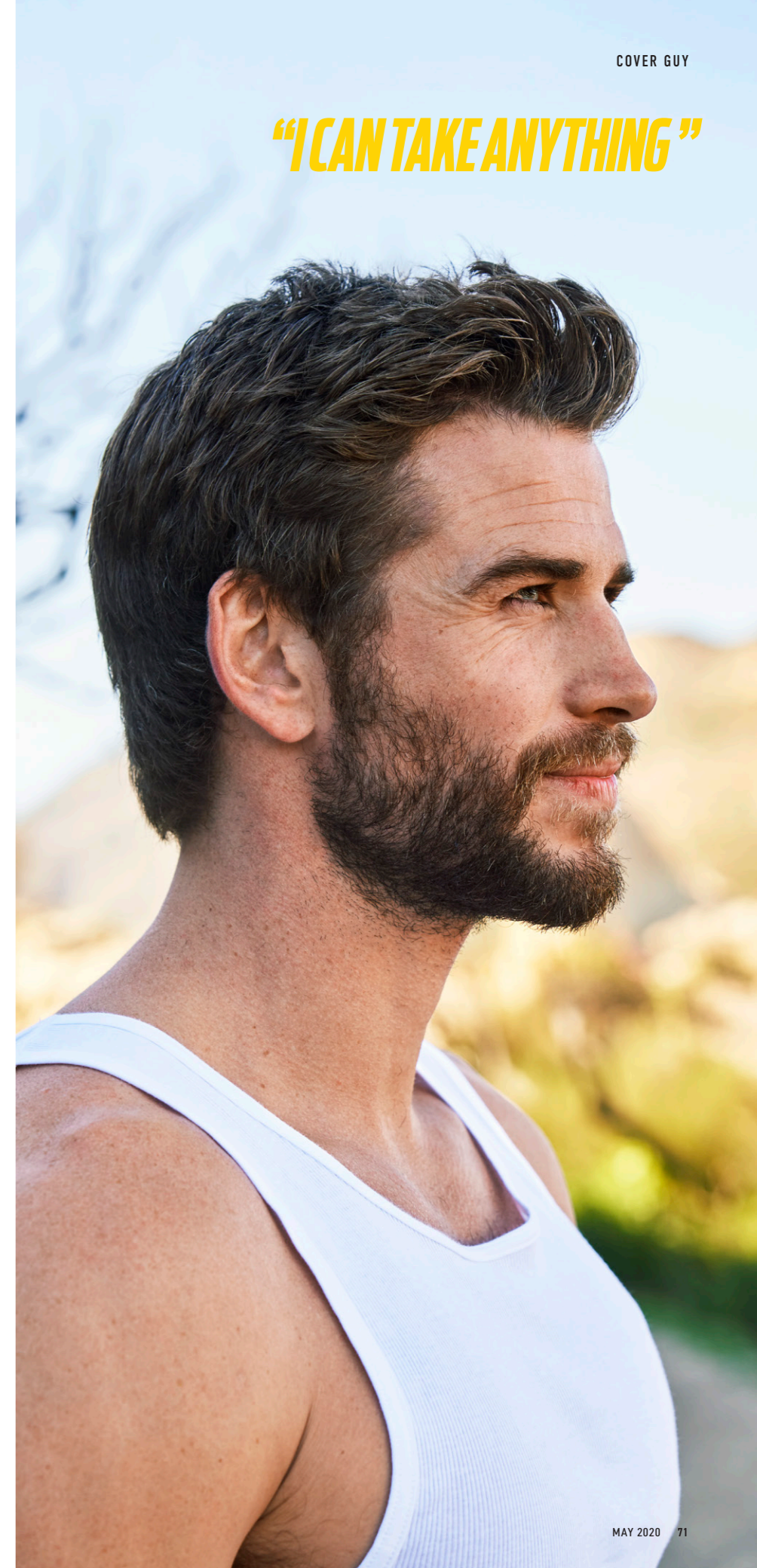
The ‘jumping’ Hemsworth so casually describes involved roles alongside heavyweights like Nicolas Cage, Kate Winslet and Dwayne Johnson, as he brought a brooding intensity to some of Hollywood’s biggest commercial franchises. There were, of course, some misses amid the run of blockbusters, projects that weren’t well received, by critics, fans and even by Hemsworth himself.

“Yeah, there’s a couple,” he says with a deep belly laugh that makes it clear he knows the movies to which I’m referring. “There’s definitely some stuff that I wish I could redo or not have done at all.” He refuses to name specific movies, respectfully sparing the people he’s worked with. But, in hindsight, he says, there have been times where he ignored his gut and proceeded with a project despite misgivings. “I’ve done that a few times. The script hasn’t been quite right and I’ve known that, but then we’ve still gone into production.” We laugh a little as I speculate on which films missed the mark and push Hemsworth on exactly what it was about these projects that didn’t work. “Nobody knows, right? Something that everyone here in this town says is nobody knows which films are going to work.”

One of Hemsworth’s greatest hits came early in his career: a starring role in *The Hunger Games* saga, a franchise that catapulted him to international stardom. It was a shock to the system for the young actor, who suddenly found his personal life more of a focus than his work.

“For a long period of time, it was very stressful. It was hard to deal with and it really got to me,” he says of dealing with media scrutiny in those early days. It’s somewhat ▶

“I CAN TAKE ANYTHING”



“FOR KEEPING MY HEAD LEVEL, I’D SAY EXERCISE HAS BEEN BIG FOR ME”



RAPID FIRE

Favourite exercise?
Pull-ups.

Least favourite?
Bulgarian split squats. They’re disgusting.

Workout anthem?
Ironman, Black Sabbath.

Cheat meal?
Donuts or pizza.

Last time you cried?
About 10 minutes ago.

Book recommendation?
Boundless, Ben Greenfield.

Motto?
At the end of the day, it’s the end of the day.

ironic, and refreshing, that as the star of a film series that involved pitting young adults against each other for public entertainment, Hemsworth very much wants to distance himself from that real-life narrative. “These days I don’t want to invest any more time into worrying about that sort of stuff,” he says. “I try to leave all that worrying and that negative energy. Just leave it alone. Let go of that stuff.”

As an actor Hemsworth lacks the direct platform to share feelings about his personal life. He’s private. He doesn’t do many interviews and he can’t just release a dis-track detailing his version of the events that have transpired in his personal life. “The majority of the time things that are written about me are completely false,” he says. “And I guess you’ve got to choose your battles. There are times when you want to speak up about it and there are other times where it’s not worth it because you’re just going to draw more attention to it. It’s better to just not think about it and let it all wash away.”

KNOWING

After 20 minutes winding down memory lane as we climb up towards the Malibu Hills, we round a corner and come to the top of a rocky ridge. “I’m outdoors a lot,” says Hemsworth, jumping out of his SUV and stretching his arms overhead. He breathes in the crisp air in a quasi-sun salutation, as though we’ve been driving for hours. “It makes me feel really good, just being outdoors, getting sun, doing exercise,” he says.

Hemsworth grabs hold of the skateboard that sits on the backseat for a few quick snaps, keen to show off his skills. It’s a slight detour on our mission to conquer the canyon, but it captures Hemsworth at his best: improvising, quick-witted and fun.

As we trade wheels for trails, the fresh air appears to distract Hemsworth from his ailments. He also seems buoyed by talk of iconic films and actors, recounting his favourite movies with the enthusiasm of a young fan. Just last night, he tells me, he watched Baz Luhrmann’s *Romeo + Juliet*, starring a young Leonardo Di Caprio.

“I look up to a lot of people in this industry,” he says of both Luhrmann and Di Caprio. Solid role models, no doubt. But it’s the person he looks up to most that catches me off guard. “I’ve worked with a lot of people in the last 11 years, but I really look up to Chris. Chris has a stronger work ethic than most people I’ve ever worked with. He’s so focused and takes it so seriously and he’s so good at it. Having him is incredible.”

The brothers share a disarming authenticity and natural likeability. Yet for all their similarities, including those trademark ice-blue eyes and cheeky grins,

Liam is anything but a Chris Hemsworth-Lite. He’s Liam. Full Strength. And he’s now reached the point where he wants the world to know it.

KILLERMAN

“Do you think he works out?” Hemsworth jokes, enthusiastically flicking through some of the shots we’ve just taken. Witty and self-deprecating, he’s quick to bat away compliments while dishing out plenty of his own to the crew. We’re only 10 minutes into the hike and the shoes have already been discarded. As Hemsworth performs in front of the camera, the jokes come thick and fast. He’s such a natural entertainer that despite the unspoilt views of this raw, jagged landscape, all eyes are locked on him as he effortlessly inhabits the lens, before scampering over loose rocks to see the result on the monitor. “How’s the rig on him!” he says, admiring the state of his arms.

It’s the kind of comment that, even in jest, would elicit an eye-roll if uttered by the wrong person. Somehow Hemsworth manages to deliver it without a trace of arrogance. He’s right. ‘The rig on him’ represents the best shape of his life. He’s proud of himself. He’s also kind of grateful for the solace and focus training has given him.

“This last six months, honestly, for keeping my head level and just staying balanced, I’d say exercise has been big for me,” he says, jumping from boulder to boulder for a few more shots. Fitness as a refuge from mental turmoil is a theme celebs often like to trot out. But judging by

the current state of his physique, it’s been a particularly productive form of escape.

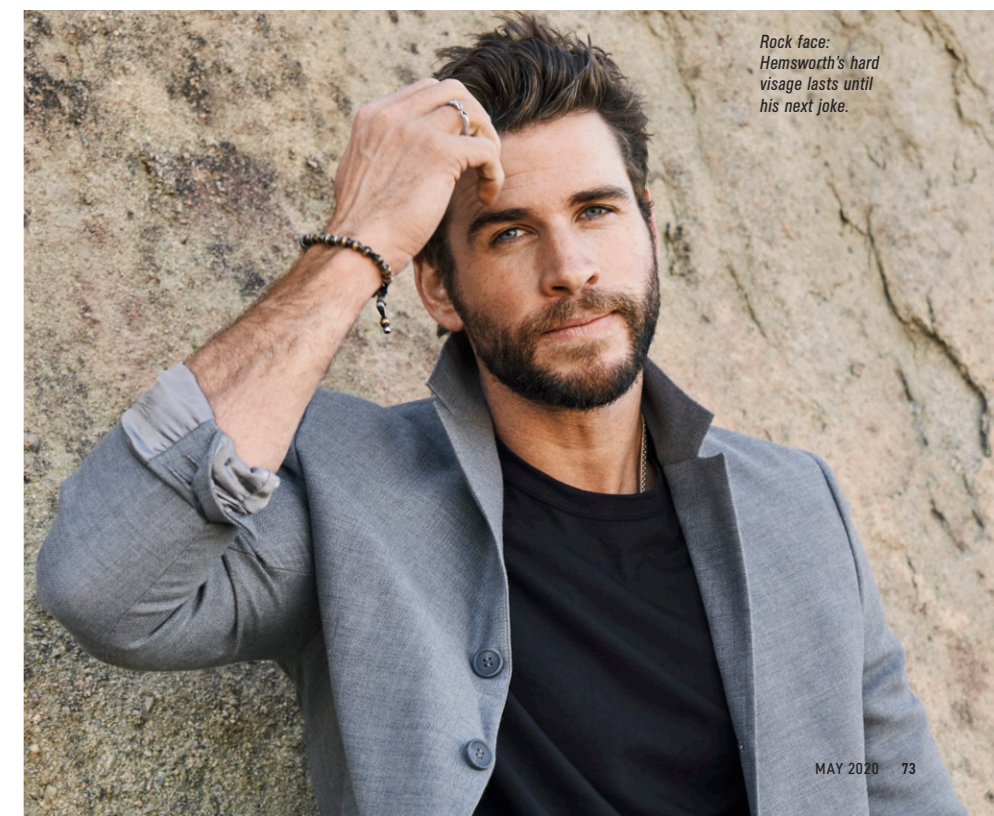
In his latest role, the thriller *Most Dangerous Game*, Hemsworth struggled to maintain size, slimming down due to an overload of incidental running on set. “I spent most of the project running around the streets and getting beaten up as well,” he says, as I realise a hike probably isn’t his preferred way to spend a day off. “But it was a great thing ’cause it just kept me moving. I was doing like, 10 kay a day or something at one point, which I’ve never done in my life.”

Hemsworth has since ditched the running due to the toll it took on his body. “I always hated long distance so I never did anything pretty much beyond that (10km).”

He’s only recently built the arms that have made global headlines. Indeed, pics of his enhanced guns momentarily knocked tales of Megxit and COVID-19 from the top of news feeds. To rebuild lost muscle, Hemsworth sought the help of Rise Movement’s Jason Walsh, completing gruelling hour-long sessions with workout partners ranging from Jared Leto to Jake Gyllenhaal.

“We do 60-minute workouts or more sometimes,” he says. “It’s just high intensity. A mixture of calisthenics, sled pulls, sled push and lots of free-weight stuff. But we don’t stop for the 60 minutes. You’re sweating and breathing hard, but also moving a lot of weight as well.”

As I’m quickly learning, Hemsworth is all-or-nothing when it comes to most things he does. “My mum always makes fun of me,” he says, rolling his eyes at himself more than ▶



Rock face: Hemsworth’s hard visage lasts until his next joke.



Baring his soles: Hemsworth has emerged from emotionally rocky terrain.

Mrs Hemsworth. “She was always like, ‘If you could just find a happy medium in between all these things you do, then you’d probably be better off’. I’m either working all out towards fitness and health or it’s Christmas time and I’m hanging out with everyone and we’re having a good time.”

I laugh at the idea of an out-of-shape Hemsworth. “It’s one extreme to the other, but I really do enjoy filling my mind with new information when it comes to brain health and any kind of health,” he says.

As we wind deeper into the trails, we start collectively fan-girling over the likes of Ben Greenfield, Ross Edgely and Wim Hof. Hemsworth has done his research when it comes to health and wellness, rattling off books and podcasts on nootropics, sobriety and cold-water immersion therapy, all practices he’s tried himself. It’s Wim Hof and his ice baths, however, that he’s most

keen on at the moment. “I know that when I’m working out really hard and I’m doing more than four days a week, if I’m including an ice bath in amongst all that, my recovery is for sure better,” he says, before listing the benefits touted by Hof.

“When you come out of an ice bath, your body feels electric. You just feel awake and you feel like your senses are heightened. It’s a great feeling.”

The ice baths will serve Hemsworth well in coming months. The week following our hike, he and Chris plan to train in Norway with Hof, before catching some of the coldest waves in the world with eldest brother, Luke, and three-time surfing world champion Mick Fanning. “Let me pick up those names you just dropped,” I joke, bending down to pick up a stone and passing it in Hemsworth’s direction, trying out some of his humour for size. It doesn’t fit me quite as well, but as

he catches the stone he flashes one of those Hemsworth grins, along with a sly, “Ayy, he’s also got the jokes”. A solid endorsement that’ll swiftly be added to my LinkedIn profile.

HUNGER GAMES

Long before he began dunking himself in tubs of freezing water, Hemsworth had been associated with another global wellness trend: veganism. The actor began eating vegan shortly before he started filming *Independence Day: Resurgence*. He wasn’t feeling himself at the time and put his lethargy down to poor diet. The effects were immediate. “The first two years, I felt great,” he says. “I felt my energy was high. I felt like my body was strong, cardio was high, everything felt really good.” While he initially turned to a vegan diet for health reasons, he found added resolve in the ecological benefits of plant-based eating.

“Like I said, I’m one extreme or the other,” he says. As it would turn out, Mumma Hemmo’s advice on moderation was spot on.

“Then February last year I was feeling really low and lethargic and wasn’t feeling good generally. And then I got a kidney stone.” Hemsworth’s ailment was what is known in medical circles as a calcium oxalate stone. The painful stone formed due to an excessively high level of oxalate – a chemical compound found in nuts, spinach, legumes and bran – in his diet. These were foods Hemsworth was consuming in epic proportions. By the time he was hospitalised, the actor’s morning smoothie alone consisted of five handfuls of spinach, almond milk, almond butter and vegan protein. A veritable oxalate cocktail. “That was what I considered super healthy and doing the right thing,” he says. “I had to completely rethink what I was putting in my body.”

While Hemsworth now openly admits his vegan days are behind him, he’s quick to recognise that although it didn’t end well for him, others may have a different, more positive experience. “If something works for a period of time, great, keep doing it,” he advises, a hint of disappointment creeping into his voice. It’s almost as though he feels he failed veganism, rather than the other way around. “If something changes and you’re not feeling great, then you’ve got to reassess it again and then figure it out.” The episode involved a complete overhaul of his diet as he took stock of what he put into his body. It included an almost six-month stint of sobriety. “I want to have optimal health at all times,” he says. “I want my mental health to be strong and I want my body to feel good.”

CATCHING FIRE

As we reach the peak of the canyon trail, we veer off the path for a moment as Hemsworth runs his hands through the surrounding burnt shrubbery. His performance is part homage to ►

“I WANT MY MENTAL HEALTH TO BE STRONG AND I WANT MY BODY TO FEEL GOOD”

“WE’RE DENYING THINGS AT A GOVERNMENT LEVEL THAT ARE WIDELY KNOWN”

LIAM WEARS:

- p68 COS POLO SHIRT, OUTERKNOWN PANTS, SUNGLASSES: LIAM’S OWN
- p70 EVERLANE T-SHIRT, NUDDIE JEANS
- p71 RAWGANIQUE TANK
- p72 COS T-SHIRT, OUTERKNOWN PANTS
- p73 COS BLAZER FOR DAYS T-SHIRT
- p74 BONOBOS SHIRT, EVERLANE PANTS
- p75 COS BLAZER FOR DAYS T-SHIRT
- p76 COS PANTS FOR DAYS T-SHIRT
- p77 BONOBOS SHIRT, TAYLOR STITCH COACH, NUDDIE JEANS

STYLING: PARIS LIBBY
GROOMING: BRANT MAYFIELD

the final scene of *Gladiator*, part old Western satire as he mutters a drawn out, “I’ll show you the ways of these lands”.

The humour of the moment can’t suppress its poignancy. The ash staining the surrounding undergrowth is a result of the 2018 Woolsey fire. The blaze scorched over 5600 hectares, including the earth on which we stand and Hemsworth’s home.

As we continue down the path, we’re confronted by the charred remains of a car, giving Hemsworth more cause for reflection. He really could ‘Show you the ways of these lands’. Indeed, he’s in the unique position of being able to relate on a deeply personal level to his fellow countrymen across the Pacific who’ve recently battled bushfires. Ever self-aware, Hemsworth is hesitant to impart advice from a position of privilege.

“Man, it’s not an easy thing to go through.” He sighs deeply as he puts his sunglasses back on. “And I wouldn’t want to tell anyone how to feel. But for me, I was able to appreciate the fact that I got all my animals out and pretty much everything that I had in my house that burnt down is replaceable to a point. There’s a select few things that hold a little bit more sentiment than others that you’ll never get back.”

His personal experiences with the harsh realities of a rapidly changing ecosystem have only strengthened his commitment to environmentalism. It’s a cause fuelled by a deep sense of frustration.

Phoenix rising: after losing his house to fire, Hemsworth is rebuilding his life.



“For the people that are still trying to deny climate change, I think there’s just too much evidence on the table at this point,” he says, making a sweeping gesture to the scorched earth surrounding us. It’s hard to argue, as we swelter mid-winter in LA, surrounded by burnt trees and the brown tinge of smog on the horizon. Even the mountains to the west should typically be snow-capped at this time of year. “We’re having more and more natural disasters. We’re having wildfires like this that start from things like dry land and lightning. It seems like we’re still denying things at a government level that are at this point widely known, you know?”

THE EXPENDABLES

As we return to his car, Hemsworth reluctantly puts his shoes back on before taking a much needed break on a bench under the shade of a lone tree. Despite his efforts to rally, his flu symptoms are rapidly returning. He takes a swig from his water bottle and I make a mental note to tell my grandkids about the time I forgot to bring water on a hike for a sick Liam Hemsworth. “I was hiking on a mountain – I don’t know if you saw it,” Hemsworth laughs as he takes another gulp, making light of his condition. It’s been a valiant effort and, despite his exhaustion, he’s in immeasurably better shape than when we set off two hours earlier.

We reboard the SUV and Hemsworth takes off cautiously, winding back down towards

the beach as he talks about his commitments for the upcoming Oscars weekend. It’s a jam-packed, social-fatigue-inducing schedule of meetings and parties. Hemsworth doesn’t complain, though, he simply takes another swig of water and draws another deep breath. He can make it through the weekend, he says, because of the excitement that lies beyond awards season. Aside from his trip to Norway, his year will merge both family and work, his next project fulfilling a long-held desire to work with Chris.

“It’s this big action-comedy that would potentially be shot in Australia, which I’m really excited by,” he says. After that, there’s a sci-fi project in which elder brother Luke will actually play his older sibling on film.

As we roll into the beachside parking lot of Malibu Seafood, Hemsworth apologises that he couldn’t spend longer in the hills. As we say goodbye I find myself overwhelmed with relief for Hemsworth and filled with hope for what’s coming his way. To be honest I wasn’t sure what state I’d find him in today. But after an afternoon on the trails, I can report that he’s feeling well, he’s healing and he’s almost certainly rebuilding – and I’m about 80 per cent sure it’s not just from the flu. He says one last “see ya later, mate” and pulls me in tight for a handshake, complete with full skin-to-skin contact, shooting me one last Hemsworth grin before taking off down the Pacific Highway. Make that 100 per cent sure. ■

GET FULLY ARMED

In LA, Hemsworth trains with Rise Nation founder Jason Walsh (@risemovement), who puts him through brutal 60-minute, total-body sessions. “There are few people who have the natural ability and the body that can absorb everything you throw at it,” says Walsh. As strong as he is though, Walsh believes Hemsworth reaches a higher plane when he’s locked in mentally. “I can’t believe how well his body responds when he’s not going through stuff,” says Walsh. “I haven’t seen him this happy for a long time. We took advantage of that.” On top of their full-body work, Walsh also gives his charge iso sessions like this arm workout. Do it three times a week to build sleeve-splitting guns:

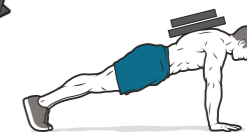
A Iso straight bar:
3-position hold, 10 sec each



B Heavy DB curls:
x8



C Lying cable curls:
AMRAP x 30 sec, fast!
(goal 20-30reps)



D Drop-set push-ups:
Start with 15 and 10kg plates on your back. AMRAP, then take off 10kg plate and AMRAP. Remove 15kg plate and finish with AMRAP.



E Standing Cable/Rope extension:
10 wide/10 narrow

Complete 3-4 rounds