

TICK TOCK, YOU DON'T STOP: IN THE GYM OR AT WORK, WAHLBERG MAKES EVERY SECOND COUNT.

GOOD VIBRA TIONS

Hollywood icon Mark Wahlberg is a master of squeezing the most out of every minute of his day. As he jumps on board the F45 bandwagon, a move that looks set to shake up the fitness landscape, *MH* sat down with the star to discover exactly what makes him tick >

BY SCOTT HENDERSON AND BEN JHOTY PHOTOGRAPHY BY THE RIKER BROTHERS



IT'S THE JULY 4 HOLIDAY WEEKEND IN LOS ANGELES AND THE CITY IS WELL AND TRULY "SHOOK".

A 7.1- magnitude earthquake rocked Southern California overnight, leaving Angelenos, many still hungover from holiday festivities, a little dazed.

I'm feeling a tad shaky myself but for reasons that have less to do with tectonic instability and more to do with the fact I'm due to sit down with a flesh-and-blood force of nature: Mark Wahlberg.

It's around 30° Celsius and morning haze has given way to a bluebird sky as I arrive at F45's plush Sherman Oaks studio. It's slightly cooler inside but the place is heating up quickly, with 30 sweaty bodies working through a series of high-intensity, bang-for-your-buck movements. The studio is a giant cube of white, with a two-storey ceiling and roof-to-floor windows facing out onto a five-lane thoroughfare.

Wahlberg arrives at 12:30 on the dot, coming straight from Mass. He's wearing a white grandpa tee, baggy workout shorts and oversized Nikes. Everything is brand new, his shirt and sneakers crispy fresh. He stands at the entrance and surveys his domain with his celebrated entourage in tow. A huge diamond cross hangs on a gold chain around his neck, while a single Apple Air Pod is tucked in his ear and remains there right up until we begin our chat at a dimly-lit Mexican dive bar called Te'Kila, just across the road.

As we sit down at a back-corner table, Wahlberg tells his entourage to hang back to give us some privacy. He's already done a workout in his home gym this morning, he tells me, although he's disappointed he didn't make it to an F45 class instead. "I spent two hours in that gym," he says. "I'm kind of watching the TV, and I'm like, 'Oh, well. Kawhi went to the Clippers, I thought he was gonna go to the Lakers'. Next thing, I'm like, 'Holy shit. I've been in here for two hours'. If I'd have just gone to the 6am class I would have had the rest of the day. That's another hour and 15 minutes."

No big deal, you might think. But to a man



who likes to maximise every spare moment, a lost 75 minutes matter. It's enough time for him to call a business associate, nail a production deal or heck, maybe even cram in some golf before spending time with his four kids.

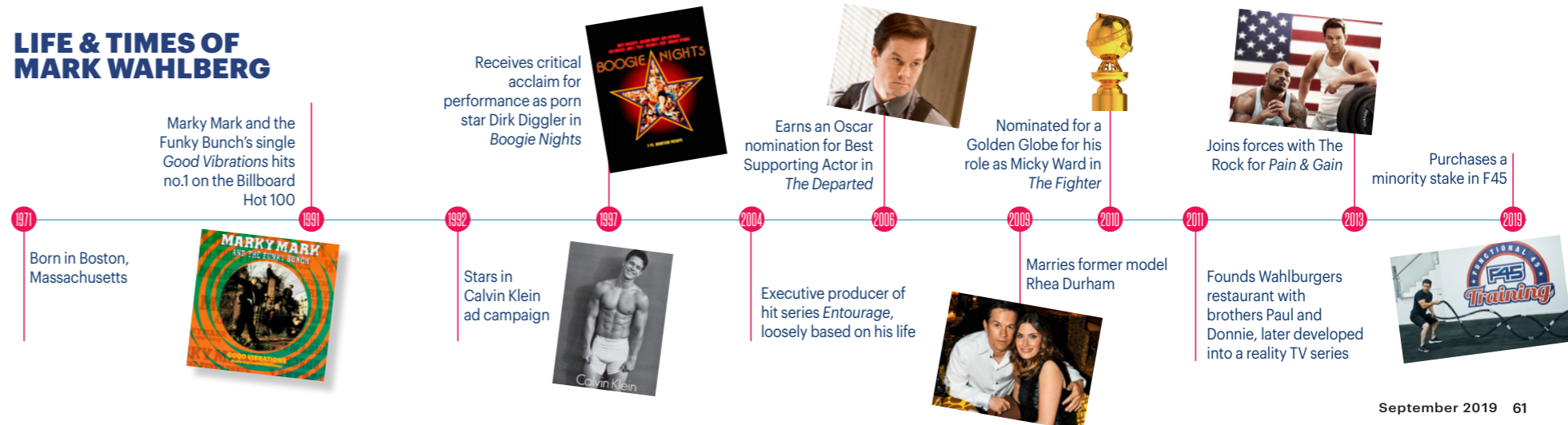
"I'm very precious with my time, which is why I'm so disciplined," says Wahlberg, who's surprisingly softly spoken. "I try to inspire people that there is enough time in the day to accomplish all of your goals and find that great balance."

It's a revealing insight into one of Hollywood's most formidable power players. Managing time with rigid discipline, relentless routine and quake-proof structure allows Wahlberg, 48, to get things done and, crucially, enjoy the fruits of his labour. Which is why F45, the functionally efficient, full-body workout system that's conquering >



BEAST OF BURDEN: WAHLBERG FITS A WORKOUT IN, COME RAIN, HAIL OR SHAKE.

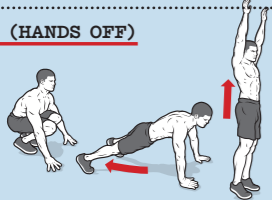
LIFE & TIMES OF MARK WAHLBERG



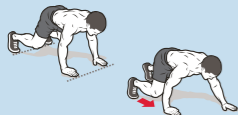
THE HOLLYWOOD WORKOUT

This is an F45 trademark and appropriately named as it's Wahlberg's go-to. It's a challenging session of focused movement, combining strength, cardio, agility, speed, power and high-fives galore. Below is a bodyweight-only sample - the full Hollywood features 27 moves. Complete the 8 movements for 6 rounds - 45sec work/10sec rest:

BURPEE (HANDS OFF)



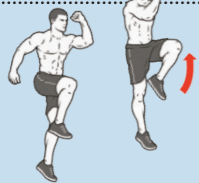
MOUNTAIN CLIMBERS



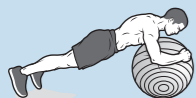
ICE SKATERS



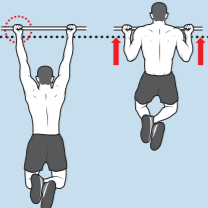
HIGH KNEES



SWISS BALL PLANK



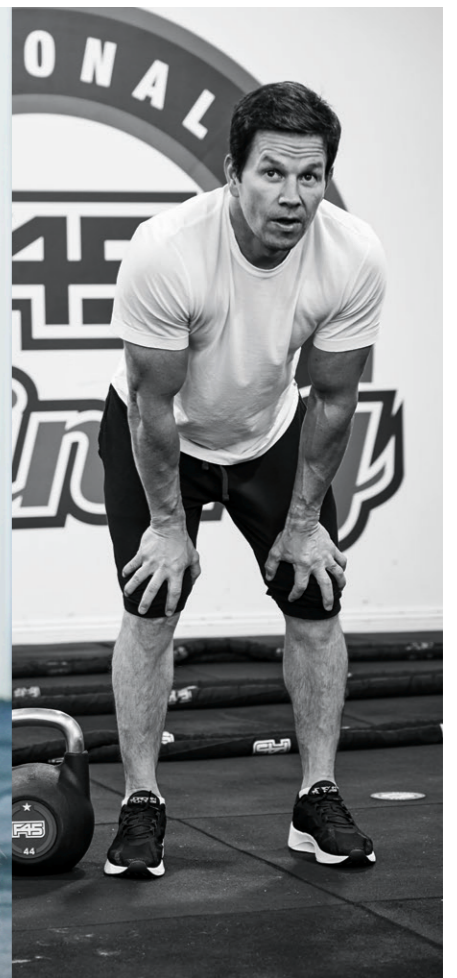
CHIN-UP



LEG RAISES



PAIN & GAIN: F45 PUSHES WAHLBERG HARDER THAN EVER BEFORE.



the world, one 45-minute class at a time, fits so nicely into his highly-regimented daily routine and ever-growing portfolio of investments. "The funny thing is my dream was always to have a home where I have my own gym and I found myself just being bored there by myself," Wahlberg says. "Then you go to a place like F45 where there's so much great energy. Now I'm like, 'I can't wait to get to F45'."

No small admission for a man who boasts one of the best home gyms in America. Indeed, in a shell-shocked LA, perhaps the only way to describe the impact of this Aussie fitness phenomenon on one of the world's biggest stars and, by extension, anyone wanting to maximise their fitness, is seismic.

FINANCIAL FLEX

If there were any doubt that we're in Wahlberg's town, it comes after we leave the dive bar and head back to the studio across five lanes of traffic. Wahlberg and his entourage are ahead of the rest of us and, as they walk out into oncoming traffic, one of his team puts up a hand to stop the flow. It's an incredible sight as the traffic comes to a standstill for one of Tinseltown's favourite

adopted sons. The F45 publicist and I aren't as brazen. She looks at me and says, "We might wait. We're not Mark Wahlberg."

In the studio, Wahlberg visibly relaxes as he begins hoisting kettlebells and pumping battle ropes under the guidance of F45 ambassador Cory George. This is the studio where Wahlberg tried his first class and where he now comes three times a week, sometimes with his wife, Rhea Durham, who's also become a disciple. "I walked in and fell in love with the concept," Wahlberg says. "I fell in love with the energy. I fell in love with the sense of community. How many businesses can you be in where people walk out of the place feeling like they can conquer the world?" He contrasts it to the bar business. "People can leave happy and merry and I guarantee they're going to feel like shit the next day."

But good vibes and thumping workout tracks alone were not enough for Wahlberg to part with his money. A famously shrewd producer, who co-financed projects like *Entourage*, *Boardwalk Empire*, *Ballers* and *The Gambler*, to name a few, Wahlberg isn't one to get seduced by slick branding and energetic beats. "It had to be about the concept first," he says. "If it was a great business

"HOW MANY BUSINESSES CAN YOU BE IN WHERE PEOPLE WALK OUT FEELING LIKE THEY CAN CONQUER THE WORLD?"

model but it wasn't something that I felt was sustainable and really top quality in the space, then I wasn't going to get involved. There are other ways to make money."

The other thing that drew Wahlberg in? F45's capacity to humble even the most highly-trained athletes. Forty-five minutes of full-body work is a brutal test of metabolic fitness. It's best you check your ego at the door, Wahlberg advises. "We've brought world class athletes in here and I've tried to explain to them that it's good to pace yourself and kind of feel it out," he says, a smile starting to form at the corners of his mouth. "Guys are like, 'I'm a world class athlete'. So, they start at 10 and they just collapse. They don't make it halfway through. Then they look at this woman here who's 50 years old, four kids, two grandkids and she's just rolling. She just keeps going. So, you can turn it up as much as

you want, you've just got to be smart about it."

Wahlberg plans to spread the F45 gospel as far and wide as he can, not only because he sees it as a tool to boost your fitness, but also because of something even more powerful that strikes at the heart of his identity: it's a vehicle for self-improvement. "I want to make sure every single person has access to F45," he says. "You want everyone to experience it because it is the best way to get fit. Just do what you can and slowly build yourself up to whatever your potential is and maximise that. You can be the best version of yourself."

FLIP THE SCRIPT

It's pretty clear Wahlberg, who grew up one of nine children on the mean streets of Boston's Dorchester neighbourhood and did time in prison as a teenager, is living his

best life. How he got here is well documented but worth repeating if, for nothing else, its sheer improbability. From troubled teen, he morphed into rapper Marky Mark while bombarding billboards worldwide in his famous Calvin Klein boxers. From there, he broke into movies, quickly becoming an A-list star and later a heavyweight producer. Along the way he got into food and beverage with Wahlburgers (disclosure: I went full method and chowed down the night before the shoot).

Constant in that remarkable and ongoing metamorphosis have been three core pillars: fitness, faith and family. Last year a post of his average day, which began at 2am with prayer and workouts, before golf and family time, went viral. In reality it was only a five-month stint for an upcoming movie called *Wonderland*. But while the discipline is driven by a relentless pursuit of success, it's >

ENTOURAGE:
WAHLBERG'S CREW
... A FLEX SHOT IS A
TERRIBLE THING
TO WASTE.



Favourite F45 move or workout?

I love the resistance classes

Least favourite workout?

Too much cardio

Cheat meal?

Oh, god. Pasta, yeah, Italian, or Wahlburgers

Last book that you read?

A World War II book about a kamikaze attack on a destroyer

Karaoke song?

I don't think I've ever done karaoke. If I had the courage, I'd do one of my own old songs

Hero?

My dad

Motto?

Treat people the way you want to be treated and if you want to make it happen, you've got to go and do it yourself

also the key to finding the holy grail of work/life balance: the time to enjoy it. "That is the thing that I want," Wahlberg says. "I don't want to have a boot camp type of existence. It's great to be able to work out, hang out with your mates, have a couple of beers and burn it off the next day. That's why I share all the things I'm doing and how I'm doing it. Finding that balance is the key."

The flipside, of course, is that when it is time to work, Wahlberg leaves nothing on the table. That way, he says, you won't have regrets. "Not everything is going to be a success, right? But I tell you what, success or failure, it feels a lot better if you've given it your all." He uses a baseball analogy to illustrate his attitude to the swings and misses inherent in doing business. "If you can bat 300 or above you're winning," he says. "We're a little above 500 with what we've been doing, which is fantastic. It's not 1000 but it's not for lack of effort."

That kind of commitment is why it's so important that whatever he chooses to invest in, be it a functional, full-body workout system or a gritty 10-episode TV drama, reflects who he is. "I'm not getting into things I don't understand, that are not in some way, shape or form, part of who I am," he says.

How do you maintain that commitment to authenticity when you have so many projects on the boil? As always, it's about carving up time and allocating your resources accordingly, Wahlberg says. Even on a movie set, where he could sit around idly shooting the shit with his co-stars, he manages to use downtime to get deals done. "If I manage my time wisely, like I've spent enough time preparing, I know what I'm doing," he says. "I don't have to show up and then try to learn my lines, like you see other people doing, right? So, I have a lot of time to do things."

SURRENDER CONTROL

It's all a far cry from his early days in Hollywood, famously depicted in hit series *Entourage*. Wahlberg is even considering an update of his life, this time focused on business in a more dedicated workshop format. "I think there could be an



"SUCCESS OR FAILURE, IT FEELS A LOT BETTER IF YOU'VE GIVEN IT YOUR ALL"

Entourage reboot in another form, showing the business that we're doing but not in a way where it's just gloss and excess but really about, how do you do this? How do you succeed in business?"

Wahlberg speaks with the assurance and authority of a man who walks the talk. So impregnable does his public face seem that I'm a little taken aback when he begins to open up about some of his vulnerabilities. He mentions the earthquake. "There's just nothing you can do," he says quietly. "Most things are out of your hands." The thought leads him to another unpredictable natural phenomenon he can't fully control: his kids. He has two sons and two daughters, but it's having girls especially, he says, that reframes your attitude to the world. "You're like, 'Oh my god, I'm going to change the world. I'm going to be the one who's going to change the game' and then you get to a point where you realise, it's their life. I know it's their life.

Hopefully you just put them in a position to make good choices."

The best way to do that, he adds, citing fitness as a case in point, is to be the best example possible. "I don't want to force them to work out because I'm thinking they'll resent it and I'll get a lot of push back, right? But if they know that, 'Oh my god, Dad has to do this every day and it seems to work for him' then maybe they'll dabble in it themselves and then if they find the same kind of result, then fantastic."

Wahlberg's town may be built on precarious tectonic plates and improbable dreams but it's clear the actor's approach to life has firm foundations. Lock those in place and you can cede ground to the forces you can't control and do your best to influence those you can. Because as Wahlberg's ever evolving, wildly unpredictable draft of a life shows, when the dust settles, you're likely to come out on top. ■