



AMERICA'S  
★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
**FITTEST  
COUPLE**  
★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
CHALLENGE

**ARE YOU UP FOR IT?**

**Transform yourselves** with the help of Chris and Heidi Powell  
and make your debut on the **cover of Muscle & Performance!**

BY LARA McGLASHAN, MFA, CPT • PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER LUEDERS & CORY SORENSEN

# OK AMERICA —

hit pause on *Game of Thrones*, put down the Funyuns and take a gander at the person next to you on the couch. *Voilà!* You've found your next workout partner. Reams of research indicate that training with a partner is the best way to stay motivated and accountable, giving you a better shot at reaching your physique goals. And what better partner than your significant other?

Maybe your collective idea of exercise as a couple is trekking from the Barcalounger to the fridge; maybe one of you works out and the other does not; or maybe — just maybe — you're both badassess who have been waiting for an opportunity like this.

No matter your level of fitness you can do this program and succeed, since it was created by two of the top transformation specialists in the country, Chris and Heidi Powell.

Best known as the husband-and-wife team on ABC's hit show *Extreme Weight Loss*, the Powells have guided hundreds of people through their weight-loss journeys and helped them adopt and nurture a healthy lifestyle. And now they have created this challenge exclusively for *Muscle & Performance*, which is the ultimate couple's guide to training, nutrition and healthy living. With their program, you can improve your physique while strengthening your relationship and family life, and be on your way to becoming America's Fittest Couple!

Here, our coaches explain the program. Check out what they have to say about their his-and-her workouts; their "diet," which includes chocolate (what?!); and the possibility of *you* being a cover model!

## M&P: How did you get involved with the America's Fittest Couple Challenge?

**HEIDI POWELL:** The Challenge is the perfect fit for us! We are always saying that the couple that plays together stays together, and exercise is a form of play.

## M&P: Can men and women really work out together?

**CHRIS POWELL:** Absolutely. Obviously, the weight being used is going to be different, but you can do a lot of the same exercises and can spot one another and give encouragement.

**HEIDI:** And I think that by training together your level of communication and bonding goes to a whole new level.

**CHRIS:** Shared suffering.

**HEIDI:** Yes! Shared suffering. When you have someone to train with, the suffering becomes more bearable! [laughs]

## M&P: What was the thought process behind the workout programming?

**CHRIS:** We wanted to take

into consideration the different needs of men and women, but also coordinate it to allow for encouragement, coaching and milestone celebrations with your partner. The result is a hybrid program that will increase strength and overall fitness while helping couples sculpt their bodies to look aesthetically pleasing.

## M&P: Is there a difference between the men's and women's workouts?

**HEIDI:** We tried to keep the movements similar so that although men and women may be doing slightly different exercises and set/rep schemes, they are close in nature and you can still train together.

**CHRIS:** The movements were selected for both function and aesthetics. In the physique world, it's important to emphasize a woman's hourglass figure, while men want to create a powerful X-frame. Because of this, you will see some women's movements geared toward shoulders, back, glutes and hamstrings. For the men,

## Who are Chris and Heidi Powell?

Besides being your trainers for the America's Fittest Couple Challenge, the Powells are the driving force behind the incredible transformations achieved on ABC's highly rated docu-series *Extreme Weight Loss*. As a couple they travel the country for speaking engagements and appearances, including regular spots on such shows as *Good Morning America* and *The Dr. Oz Show*. They also recently co-authored *Extreme Transformation: Lifelong Weight Loss in 21 Days* (Hachette Books, 2015). But as good as they are together, they are also incredible solo acts.

**Chris Powell** holds a degree in exercise science (CSCS) with concentrations in biomechanics and physiology. He is a certified trainer, motivational coach and author, having written two *New York Times* best-selling books: *Choose to Lose* (Hyperion, 2011) and *Choose More, Lose More for Life* (Hachette Books, 2013). He is also a nationally ranked physique competitor.

🌐 [chrispowell.com](http://chrispowell.com)  
👍 / 🐦 / 📷 [RealChrisPowell](#)

**Heidi Powell** is an ACE- and CrossFit-certified trainer with more than a decade of coaching experience. She travels the country with Chris for speaking engagements and television appearances, writes a highly successful blog and is part of several editorial advisory boards. Besides being full-time mom to the couple's four kids, Heidi is also an NPC bikini competitor and recently qualified for the Nationals.

🌐 [heidipowell.net](http://heidipowell.net)  
👍 / 🐦 / 📷 [RealHeidiPowell](#)





“No matter what level you’re starting at, you can do this program. These workouts will challenge even the fittest athletes.”

there is a slightly larger focus on chest, back, shoulders, arms and legs.

**M&P: What kind of workouts will participants experience?**

**CHRIS:** You’ll focus on big, heavy single sets for your main strength movements, then move into supersets for your hypertrophy work. This is great for time management

and definitely gets a great cardiovascular response while building muscle. You’ll finish each session with a met-con [metabolic conditioning] for stamina, fat-burning and muscular endurance.

**M&P: Can anyone do this program?**

**HEIDI:** Absolutely. Each exercise has modifications, so no matter what level you’re

starting at, you can do this program.

**M&P: What if someone is already superfit — will they also see results?**

**CHRIS:** If you are ready and willing to push yourself, these workouts can challenge even the fittest athlete! You control the throttle by modifying the weights used for the strength/hypertrophy components, as

well as the speed at which you complete your met-cons.

**M&P: You outline this program in a 30-day block — but for the Challenge, couples will continue beyond that one-month mark, right?**

**HEIDI:** You can follow the program as written and use the more challenging exercises as you get stronger and fitter.

**CHRIS:** Also, you can progress by increasing the intensity of the weights being used. By following this program, you should see and feel a noticeable difference in your strength, and over time you should be able to lift heavier and heavier weights for the prescribed rep schemes.

**M&P: How important is nutrition to this program?**

**CHRIS:** If body composition is important to you, then nutrition is going to be extremely important. Nutrition is going to control the throttle of your performance as well, so we definitely recommend following the program for maximum results!

**M&P: What will participants get from you as coaches in terms of nutritional advice?**

**HEIDI:** We’ll give you the full layout of recipes to follow day-by-day, and give nutrition tips and tricks for carving it into your daily regimen.

**M&P: What is your overall nutritional philosophy?**

**CHRIS:** We are big proponents of carb cycling, not just for physiological reasons, but for psychological reasons as well. It allows us to enjoy some of our favorite foods that many nutrition programs would eliminate: bread, pasta, cereals. And it also includes butter, bacon, cheese, even cream!

**M&P: Are the meals and recipes easy to make?**

**HEIDI:** Yes, but they’re still delicious. They range from fancier gourmet meals for the food connoisseur, to quick-prep meals that are done in a matter of minutes for those who are on the go.

**CHRIS:** And the meals are not boring diet food. They are amazing. We actually enlisted the help of some incredible chefs to create the recipes, based on our macronutrient breakdowns and calorie requirements. Then we took the ones we love and use the most, and shared them with you.

**M&P: Are you both good cooks?**

**CHRIS:** Heidi is incredible in the kitchen and is without a doubt the best cook between us. Unfortunately, she doesn’t spend much time there! I actually enjoy food prep more and spend most of the time prepping meals for the family. And

I must say I’ve gotten pretty darn good over the years!

**M&P: How do you find the time to work out with four kids?**

**CHRIS:** You will never find it, you have to create it.  
**HEIDI:** Yes, you make it happen. And if you can’t make it to the gym together one day, tag team it — he goes to the gym while I stay with the kids, then he comes home and tag! You’re it. My turn.

**M&P: Do you think being healthy and active makes you stronger as a family?**

**HEIDI:** I don’t want to say living a healthy and active lifestyle is the only reason we

are a strong family, but I will say that one of our ways to bond is over health, fitness and activity.

**CHRIS:** Fitness should be fun, and when you are having fun together, you are bonding.

**HEIDI:** Plus, it sets the stage for a lifetime of healthy living. I mean, let’s be real: Kids don’t always do as you say; they do as you do. If you want your kids to live a healthy lifestyle, it’s crucial that you are living one yourself. Practice what you preach or the impact will not be made.

**M&P: Do you think participants could actually make significant enough chang-**

**es to be on the cover of M&P using your program?**

**HEIDI:** Absolutely! Like we’ve mentioned before, this is the exact program format we both follow in real life.

**CHRIS:** Know that nothing is out of reach, not even a magazine cover! One thing we learned long ago is that if we set our sights on the prize, make a plan of action and work harder than anyone else to get there, together we could accomplish anything.

**HEIDI:** Absolutely. It really is possible to make your dreams come true and land the cover of *M&P* with your significant other. And even if you don’t land the cover, you’ll be fitter and happier than ever!

## 5 Rules for Success From the Powells

1. To make progress, have a goal and a structured plan in place. Training without a goal is like building a home without a blueprint. You’ll throw a bunch of things together, then you’ll probably end up tearing it down and starting all over!
2. Fitness should be fun! If it’s not, you aren’t doing it right. Test-drive a few different activities until you find one you’re passionate about.
3. Intensity yields results. The harder you work, the more likely you are to reach your goal.
4. You only fail if you quit. Patience, hard work and determination will eventually get you to where you want to go.
5. Rest and recovery are equally as important as the work you do in the gym.



# Nom Nom

A diet that includes mac and cheese with bacon? Chili? French toast? Sign us up! The Powells designed a nutrition program that allows you to get into peak physical condition while still eating some of your favorite foods. Check out this recipe from their list of Clean Cheats — just one of the many delicious meals that is included in the program.

## Mac and Cheese with Bacon

Makes 1 serving

- Brown rice pasta: 2 ounces for women; 4 ounces for men
- 1/4 cup pasta water
- 2 tablespoons onion, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic, minced
- Dash of cayenne pepper
- 1/3 cup cheddar cheese (2 percent fat)
- 2 tablespoons plain Greek yogurt
- 1 slice turkey bacon, chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 tablespoon whole-grain bread crumbs
- 1 tablespoon Parmesan cheese

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Cook pasta per package directions, adding a pinch of sea salt to the water. Drain, saving 1/4 cup of the water.
2. Heat a small frying pan over medium-high flame. Coat with cooking spray and saute onions, garlic and cayenne pepper until onions are soft. Add 1/4 cup of pasta water to the pan and reduce heat to low. Add the cheddar cheese and stir until melted.
3. Return pasta to its original pot (without heat). Add yogurt, bacon, melted cheese mixture, salt and pepper to taste. Mix well.
4. Pour mixture into a small baking dish. Top with bread crumbs and Parmesan cheese.
5. Bake for 10 minutes.



### Nutrition facts (per serving):

Women: calories 505, fat 17 grams, carbs 69 grams, protein 25 grams  
Men: calories 602, fat 19 grams, carbs 90 grams, protein 27 grams

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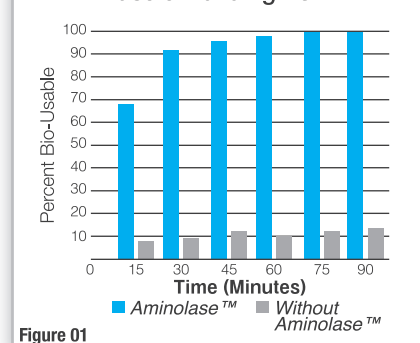


Figure 01

Stomach Discomfort After Protein Ingestion

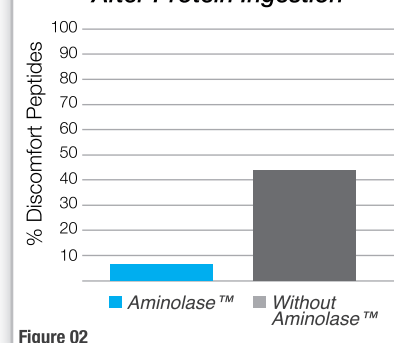


Figure 02



This program will allow you to enjoy some of your favorite foods.

**Leg Day** Heidi and Chris Powell both love to train legs. Here's one of their favorite workouts to do as a team, and just one example of the kind of programming you'll experience when you sign up for the America's Fittest Couple Challenge.

Exercise	Sets	Reps
Heavy Walking Lunge	3	4 each leg
Speed Lunge	3	4 each leg
Goblet Lateral Lunge — superset with — Ice Skater	3	4 each leg
		4 each leg

**Met-Con: 5 RFT\***  
100 High Knees  
20 Reverse Lunges (10 each leg)  
10 Push-Ups

\*RFT = rounds for time

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# QUICK-FIRE QUESTIONS for Chris and Heidi Powell

#### Sweet or salty?

**HEIDI:** Sweet and salty. Depends on the mood. I am a true woman!

**CHRIS:** Both. I actually like sweet and salty together.

#### Celebrity crush?

**HEIDI:** Chris Powell.

**CHRIS:** Heidi Powell. (I'm a wise man.)

#### Country music or pop?

**HEIDI:** Country all the way!

**CHRIS:** Heavy metal.

#### Ocean or desert?

**HEIDI:** Desert for everyday. Beach (not ocean) for a vacation.

**CHRIS:** Desert.

#### Chocolate or vanilla?

**HEIDI:** Both! Depends on the mood.

**CHRIS:** Vanilla.

#### Early bird or night owl?

**HEIDI:** Early bird. Although it doesn't happen as often as I'd like.

**CHRIS:** I like to be an early bird.

#### Your best bodypart?

**HEIDI:** I appreciate my glutes more than anything only because I have worked so hard for what I have.

**CHRIS:** My chest.

#### Your partner's best bodypart?

**HEIDI:** Do I have to choose? He has too many! Butt, abs, chest, eyes, total package.

**CHRIS:** Oh, I like it all. Face.

#### Favorite workout to do together?

**HEIDI:** Cindy. [This is a CrossFit workout of five pull-ups, 10 push-ups and 15 squats for as many rounds as possible in 20 minutes.]

**CHRIS:** Cindy.

#### Least favorite workout to do together?

**HEIDI:** Anything where he is telling me what to do.

**CHRIS:** Anything involving running, because she is better than me at it and I hate running! ■

**"Fitness should be fun. And when you are having fun together, you are bonding."**



## Want To Be On The Cover?

If you've dreamed of becoming a magazine cover model, here is your chance! Chris

and Heidi Powell will serve as your personal coaches to help you push yourselves to a new personal best. For more details visit [muscleandperformance.com/fitcouples](http://muscleandperformance.com/fitcouples).

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