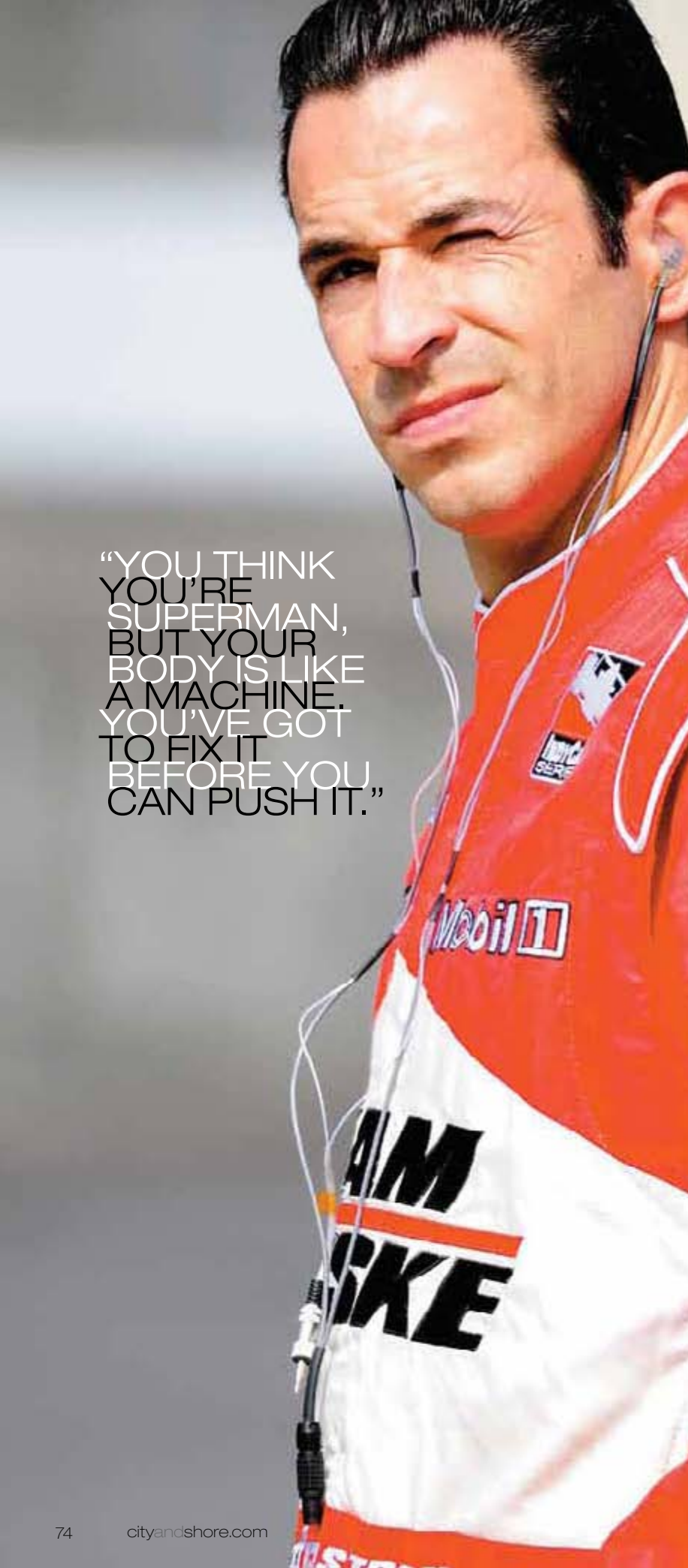




# SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

**They combat g-forces**, harness the winds, ace serves and sack quarterbacks. They speed across ice and slice through water. They often win, but not always. They face loss, injury and heartache just like the rest of us. However, these top athletes persevere with proven formulas that foster strength, stamina and mental toughness...that keep them in the game.

BY ELIZABETH RAHE



“YOU THINK YOU’RE SUPERMAN, BUT YOUR BODY IS LIKE A MACHINE. YOU’VE GOT TO FIX IT BEFORE YOU CAN PUSH IT.”

## HELIO CASTRONEVES, INDYCAR RACING

**H**elio Castroneves describes 2009 as a rollercoaster. In March, the two-time Indianapolis 500 winner and *Dancing With the Stars* champion faced federal tax evasion and conspiracy charges in a Miami courtroom. He was acquitted and three weeks later won the Indy 500 for the third time. Then he and his girlfriend, Adrian Henao, announced they were expecting a baby. In October he walked away from a crash during practice at the Homestead-Miami Speedway, and he finished fourth in the 2009 IndyCar series.

As the new year kicks off, Castroneves, 34, of Miami is welcoming his daughter, Mikaella, and training for the IndyCar season, which begins March 14, for the first time in his native Brazil.

“Hopefully the rollercoaster is only going up from now,” he says.

**Describe your off-season training.** After a tough season the body needs a rest, but you have to keep blood flowing. I do low-profile weightlifting, jogging for 40 minutes. I play some tennis and relax.

**Describe your eating habits.** I don’t eat red meat or drink soft drinks. I like to eat small portions every two to three hours. My guilty pleasure is dessert...chocolate soufflé, with the chocolate melting, with vanilla ice cream. Oooo... let’s talk about something else.

**What’s the best fitness advice you’ve ever received?** You have to respect your body. You can go over the limits of what it can do. You think you’re Superman, but your body is like a machine. You’ve got to fix it before you can push it.

**What gives you joy?** I think my daughter when she comes in January. I’m also very fortunate that my wife gives me great joy – being able to wake up knowing you can go as fast as you can and you have the opportunity to meet great people.

**Are you still dancing?** I think it was a phase of the moment, to be honest, but I would love to learn more different types of dances. It was a great way to clear your mind of problems. When I was going through the trial, the only thing I was watching was *Dancing With the Stars*... I knew it would bring me great memories I couldn’t be racing. I was waiting for my life to be decided.

**What are your hopes for your daughter, Mikaella?** I keep joking with Adriana, either she is going to be a great golfer or an attorney because I am an attorney in the family. All joking aside, I am waiting full of love.

**What are your professional goals for 2010?** Going for a fourth Indianapolis 500...wow...it’s just amazing just to think about it already. And trying for [IndyCar] championship.

**And your personal goals?** To make sure I can be not only a good, but an amazing dad. To build this family, be a great husband, a great man, a great partner and friend.

### Racing tune-ups

Trainer Carlos Bailly devised exercises to train Castroneves for the physical and mental demands of open-wheel racing. To encourage concentration during physical activity, he does sit-ups on a stability ball while calling out information from charts. To speed reaction time, he boxes two-to-three-minute rounds as Bailly calls out numbered punches in random order. (See more at [www.heliocastroneves.com](http://www.heliocastroneves.com))

## DARA TORRES, SWIMMING

**I**n her book, *Age is Just a Number* (Broadway, 2009) swimmer Dara Torres admits she has felt old. However, at age 41, when she woke up in a dorm in Beijing’s Olympic Village, she says she felt happily middle-aged. It was her fifth Olympics, her first being in 1984, and she added three silver medals to her collection to make an even dozen. Torres, 42, who lives in Parkland, has also been a TV commentator and model, and she is the mother of 3-year-old Tessa. Currently rehabilitating from October reconstructive surgery on her left knee, she does not rule out another Olympic shot.

**Describe your training.** I work with a team of trainers, stretchers and therapists on a unique program that focuses on technique and recovery. I typically do a two-hour pool workout followed by a weight training/balance training workout, recovery stretching and cool-down.

**How has your training changed?** Training for the Olympics in my 40s was a lot different than when I was younger. At my age, I have to be much more aware about what my body can and can’t do. Recovery time for my body is very different now than when I was training for the Olympics as a teenager.

**How do you motivate yourself on down days?** I’m very big on setting goals in life, and when I’m tired or don’t really feel like training, I think about my goals.

**Any advice for middle-agers struggling to stay in shape?** I’ve always felt that exercise is a lifestyle choice, and with all lifestyle choices you have to make the time and commitment. I would hope that if my performance has done anything, it has encouraged people to rethink getting up off the couch and busy moms to grab a couple minutes for themselves.

**Describe your eating habits.** I always start my day with a Living Fuel shake, which gives me a solid nutritional base and energy for my first workout in the pool. After I swim, I have a combination of milk and specific amino acids, which help build and repair muscle tissue post-swimming. I typically have a salad for lunch with lots of fruit, and dinner always includes a good-quality protein first with a quality carbohydrate and a salad.

**What are your goals for 2010?** One of my main goals is rehabilitating my knee so that I can decide whether or not I should go for the Olympics in 2012. Another big goal is for my second book, *Gold Medal Fitness* [Random House, May 2010], to be a success. I will be busy getting the word out on how to live a fitter life.

**What gives you joy?** Spending time with my daughter; there is nothing I’d rather do.



“TRAINING FOR THE OLYMPICS IN MY 40S WAS A LOT DIFFERENT THAN WHEN I WAS YOUNGER.”



**MISTY MAY-TREANOR, BEACH VOLLEYBALL**

**M**isty May-Treanor was practicing the jive for *Dancing With the Stars* in October 2008 when she felt a pop in her calf. The injury and subsequent surgery ended her *DWTS* run and kept her off the beach volleyball court for most of 2009. The winner, with partner Kerri Walsh, of two Olympic gold medals, May-Treanor, 32, has been working hard to get back in the game for 2010. She lives in Coral Springs in the off-season with her husband, former Florida Marlins catcher Matt Treanor, and their boxers, Gruden and Boogie.

**How is the recovery going?** It's coming along. It doesn't hurt, and I'm working on getting the strength back. I not only tore my Achilles, but I tore my calf muscle, too. I did the double-whammy.

**And Matt was recovering from hip bone spur surgery?** Yes, we shared the scooter. We were each others' nurses, each others' cooks. Matt's doing better. He's playing in the Dominican Republic, working to play next season.

**Describe your training.** In the off-season, I rarely touch a ball. That's my time to work out with my trainer...to rebuild my muscles and build bulk. Three days a week I lift, do some running before plyometrics and jump training. Two days a week I work on speed and agility and do an hour of Pilates.

**How do you motivate yourself on down days?** First, I feel lucky every time I wake up in the morning. I try to remember people who can't do as much – the disabled, the sick. My dad always taught me that there's someone else out there who would love to switch places with you. From the competitive side, knowing that there's someone else doing the same thing motivates me.

**Describe your eating habits.** I primarily listen to my body. When I'm playing, my body will crave meat. With my body type if I eat too many carbs, it goes to certain places. I split my intake into six meals, and I try not to eat past 6 or 6:30 p.m. I used to make fun of my grandparents for eating early!

**What gives you joy?** I enjoy talking to kids and sharing my passion for the game and my knowledge and my gold medals. Maybe it will help them think, 'One day I can do this. I just have to work hard.' It doesn't have to be sports; it can be becoming a doctor or a vet or whatever.

**What are your goals for 2010?** To play! Also, I want to continue with my master's degree in coaching and athletic administration and to put some camps and clinics together. I want to work with young players...help fill my shoes when I'm gone.

**Any plans for the 2012 Olympics?** The joke I'm telling now is that if the world ends, [as in the movie *2012*], there will be no Olympics. It's so early anything can happen. If it's in the cards, it's in the cards. You can't look too far ahead.

"I FEEL LUCKY EVERY TIME I WAKE UP IN THE MORNING. I TRY TO REMEMBER PEOPLE WHO CAN'T DO AS MUCH..."

**TERRY HUTCHINSON, SAILING**

**W**hen Terry Hutchinson signed on as tactician for Emirates Team New Zealand in the 2007 America's Cup race, he worked to get in top shape. Participating in a sailing fitness program in his hometown of Annapolis, MD, he says he was able to achieve a physical condition that allowed for a higher level of mental concentration and discipline on the race course. His skill and hard work have paid off. The Emirates team swept the America's Cup challenger series to win the Louis Vuitton Cup. Hutchinson was Rolex Yachtsman of the Year for 2008, and the teams he serves continue to be in the top ranks of world competition.

Hutchinson, 41, was in Fort Lauderdale Dec. 4-6, racing in the Melges 32 Gold Cup, hosted by Lauderdale Yacht Club. A professional sailor, he takes every aspect of his craft – including fitness – seriously.

**Describe your training.** Sailing takes a strong core, a strong back and a lot of flexibility. When I'm not racing, I train three times a week in a gym, working with weights and the Swiss ball, and I do two days of cardio.

**What is the most physically demanding aspect of racing?** Going from a stationary position to quick action. You're hiking [leaning out] over the windward side of the boat with a foam-covered lifeline across your stomach, touching your toes. Then you have to jump up and swap sides or trim the sails. All the blood has gone out of your legs and sometimes your feet are asleep, but you have to move.

**What's the best fitness advice you've ever received?** Being physically fit will make you mentally stronger. I'm a fairly intense person, and I get frustrated if I think I don't have control. Unlike football or basketball where the game is controlled by certain plays, Mother Nature is the biggest factor on a boat. Plus, there's the challenge of getting 10 people to work together. Being physically fit gives you the opportunity to gain mental strength so you can deal with a challenge well and get on with it.

**Who inspires you?** My wife, Shelley. We spend a lot of time apart, and she has always done an unbelievable job with our three kids – and a hard day at home is harder than a hard day on the race course. She always says the biggest mistake would be not giving 110 percent, considering the sacrifices we all make in being apart.

**What are your goals for 2010?** To develop my skills as a helmsman so I can be ready for the next America's Cup opportunity. In 2007 we won the Louis Vuitton Cup 5-0, which was the first sweep in history, but we lost to the defender, Alinghi, 5-2 for the America's Cup.



"BEING PHYSICALLY FIT GIVES YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO GAIN MENTAL STRENGTH SO YOU CAN DEAL WITH A CHALLENGE WELL AND GET ON WITH IT."



**JENNIFER RODRIGUEZ, SPEED SKATING**

**W**hen asked who inspires her to gut out an Olympic comeback at age 33, Miami long-track speed skater Jennifer Rodriguez says simply, "my mom."

Barbara Rodriguez succumbed to cancer June 15, 2009, after a painful 16-year battle. She was always her daughter's No. 1 supporter, from her early days as a national champion artistic roller skater and a world champion inline speed skater. When Jennifer switched to ice and made the Olympic team, Barbara traveled to Nagano, Japan, in 1998 after a double mastectomy. She was in Salt Lake City in 2002 when Jennifer won two bronze medals, and she was in Torino, Italy, in 2006 – battling liver cancer – when her daughter failed to medal. Although Jennifer considered abandoning her comeback last summer, she decided that her mom would have wanted her to skate.

"My mom has been here every step of the way my entire life. She had an incredible strength and continues to inspire me."

She hopes for a strong showing at the Vancouver Olympics in February – for herself and her mom.

**Describe your training.** Speed skaters don't have ice year round, so we have to incorporate different activities to work our skating muscles – cycling, weight training, dry-land skating, plyometrics, running sprints, inline skating, and of course, ice. During the summer, our training lasts about six-plus hours, five days a week. During the winter/race season, training lasts about four hours, five days a week.

**Describe your eating habits.** Pretty boring. I eat granola cereal for breakfast, a sandwich for lunch (turkey or tuna) and pretty much whatever for dinner. I don't drink soda, except on a rare occasion. I don't eat any fast food ever and try to stick with organic. My weaknesses are chocolate and cookies.

**What's the best fitness advice you've ever received?** Make the hard days harder and the easy days easier. Also, quality over quantity.

**What's your best tip for healthy living?** Enjoy life and get the most out of it. Treat your body well, and do what makes you truly happy.

**What gives you joy?** Chocolate (just kidding). My family, my friends and traveling.

**What are your goals for 2010?** Professionally, to finish my speedskating career having skated some good races at the Olympic Games. Personally, to get adjusted to real life and return to school for physical therapy.

**Any thoughts on 2014?** Not for skating; 2010 will be my last.

"MY MOM HAS BEEN HERE EVERY STEP OF THE WAY MY ENTIRE LIFE. SHE HAD AN INCREDIBLE STRENGTH AND CONTINUES TO INSPIRE ME."

**JASON TAYLOR, FOOTBALL**

**O**n the football field, Miami Dolphins linebacker Jason Taylor is a formidable combination of strength, agility and size (6'6, 255 pounds), who strikes fear in opposing quarterbacks. Among many honors, he was named the 2006 Associated Press NFL Defensive Player of the Year, received first-team All-Pro honors three times and has been chosen for six Pro Bowls (as of 2009).

Off the field he has distinguished himself by working with numerous charity organizations, and six years ago he and his wife, Katina, founded the Jason Taylor Foundation to address the needs of South Florida children. He was chosen for the 2007 Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award for his contributions to football as well as his philanthropic efforts. Plus, he's not a bad dancer, having scored runner-up honors on *Dancing With the Stars* in 2008.

Taylor, 35, lives in Weston with Katina and their three children.

**Describe your off-season training.** I usually take the months of January, February and March off. When I start my program I work four days a week. I do an hour of weight training and an hour of agility and on-field work.

**How do you motivate yourself on down days?** I realize that there is someone out there who is trying to beat me. That motivates me to be the best. In order to be the best, you have to work and push yourself through when you don't feel like it.

**How is your training different now than when you were in your 20s?** I am a little smarter now. You realize what your body can and can't take, and you plan your workouts accordingly.

**Describe your eating habits.** I eat whatever I feel like eating. [He laughs.] I try to be smart, but it doesn't always work out.

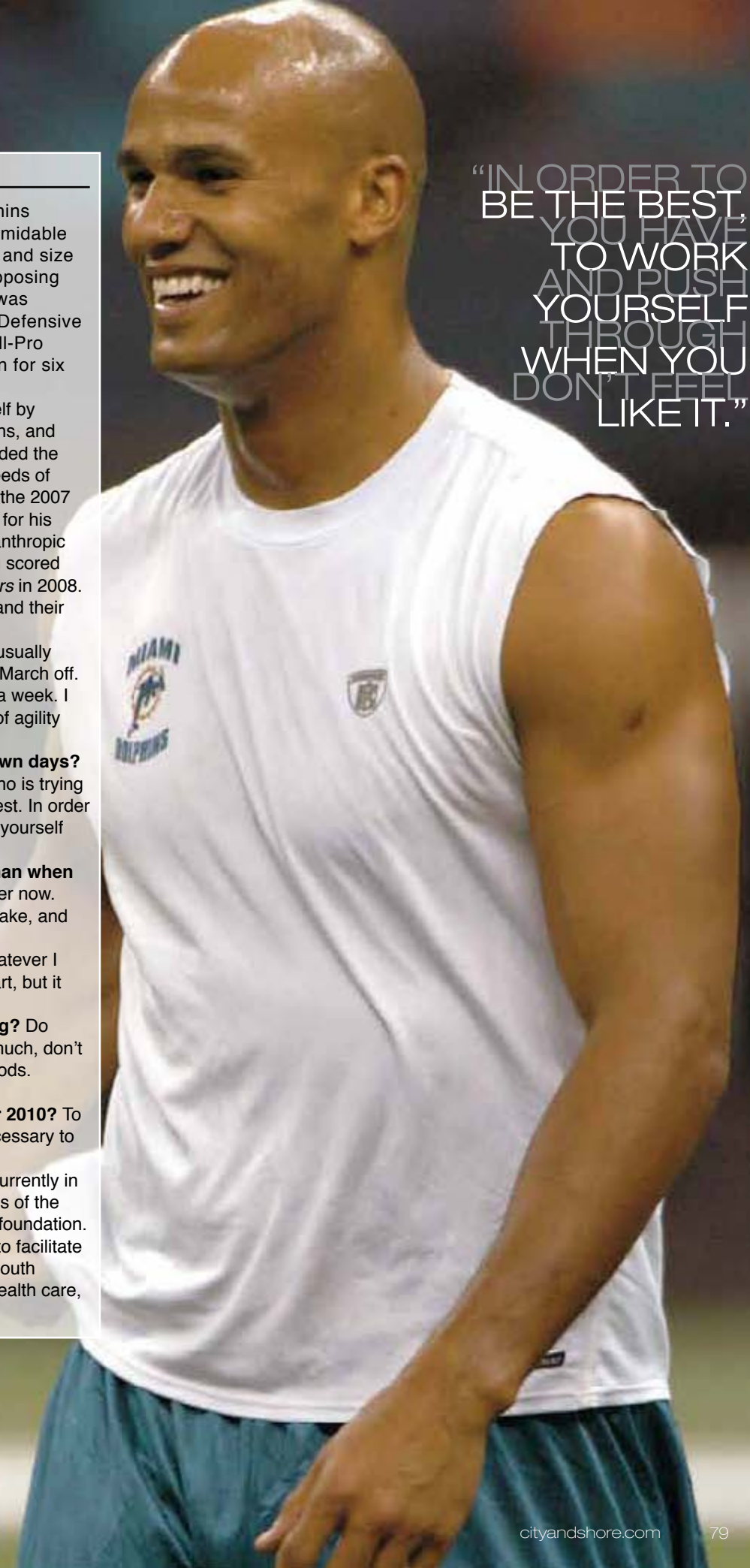
**What's your best tip for healthy living?** Do everything in moderation. Don't drink too much, don't party too much, don't eat too many fatty foods.

**What gives you joy?** Winning.

**What are your professional goals for 2010?** To win and continue to work on the things necessary to be successful on and off the field.

**Any new projects for 2010?** We are currently in the planning process for the 2010 programs of the Jason Taylor Foundation ([www.jasontaylorfoundation.com](http://www.jasontaylorfoundation.com)). We are doing a lot of exciting things to facilitate the personal growth and improvement of South Florida's children in need by focusing on health care, education and quality of life.

"IN ORDER TO BE THE BEST, YOU HAVE TO WORK YOURSELF AND PUSH YOURSELF THROUGH WHEN YOU DON'T FEEL LIKE IT."



DAVE CROSS, MIAMI DOLPHINS

## JAMES BLAKE, TENNIS

**A**diversity hit tennis player James Blake hard in 2004. He ran into a steel net post and broke a vertebra in his neck, his father died of stomach cancer and Blake got a bad case of shingles, which paralyzed half his face for months. Everything happens for a reason, he has said, and his rehabilitation from the neck injury allowed him to spend time with his dad during his final days. While coping with these challenges, he developed a fresh perspective on life, especially the value of family and friends. He also mounted an impressive tennis comeback, reaching a No. 4 world ranking in 2006. Blake chronicled his experiences in the best-seller *Breaking Back: How I Lost Everything and Won Back My Life* (HarperCollins, 2007).

He continues to inspire his fans, as evidenced by their letters and his responses on his website ([www.jamesblaketenis.com](http://www.jamesblaketenis.com)). He hosts an annual charity event in New York City and sells J-Block merchandise to raise funds for the Thomas Blake Sr. Memorial Cancer Research Fund, named in honor of his father. Blake, 30, who lives in the Tampa area, is scheduled to play at the Delray Beach International Tennis Championships Feb. 20-28 at the Delray Beach Stadium & Tennis Center ([www.yellowtennisball.com](http://www.yellowtennisball.com)).

**Describe your training.** It always includes tennis, of course. Long days are four hours on the court, and shorter days are about 90 minutes. Afterward there will usually be about an hour on the field or track with sprints or agility drills, followed by 45 minutes to an hour of lifting.

**How do you motivate yourself on down days?** I just think of the fact that I'm still a lucky person, and I still love what I do. Most people can't go to work and say that. I think of how I can make something positive happen that day. That usually includes something I can control, like my effort level or just getting stronger on that day.

**Any advice for people battling back from an injury?** I would say to set achievable daily goals to get better. It's too tough to set a long-term goal that seems far away. If you just find ways to get better every day, you will be amazed how quickly you make progress on a larger scale.

**Describe your eating habits.** I just try to eat as much as I can – lots of protein and carbs. I have to make an effort to keep the weight on that I need to keep me healthy throughout the year. I always have a protein shake after workouts, and I eat a lot of snacks like bars and nuts and fruit during the day.

**What's the best fitness advice you've ever received?** Do the things that you like to do. If you do the exercises that you like, you will continue to do them.

**What gives you joy?** My greatest joy comes from spending time with my family and friends. I love catching up with them after I've been away for a while.

**Who inspires you?** When I was a kid, I was inspired by my parents, and the athlete I looked up to was Michael Jordan.

**What are your goals for 2010?** My professional goals for 2010 are to find a way to keep getting better. It seems like it's getting tougher as I get older, but I think I can do it. My personal goal is to just keep improving myself. I want to be more considerate of others.

A photograph of tennis player James Blake on a blue tennis court. He is wearing a blue and white sleeveless shirt, white shorts, a white headband, and white Nike sneakers with blue accents. He is holding a tennis racket and looking towards the camera with a focused expression. The background is a blurred blue wall with some white text.

“I STILL LOVE  
WHAT I  
DO. MOST  
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