



JANUARY 2005
MAX
SPORTS FITNESS

**HUGE
SUPPLEMENT
SALE**
P7



**HOT
BODY**
Contest Winner
Nikki Zeno P30

**PACK ON
SIZE** P44

**MEET MOTLEY
CRUE'S VINCE NEIL** P18

**WORLD RECORD
BREAKING**
Actor And Stuntman
Ron Sarchian P34

ULTIMATE FIGHTER
Randy Couture P48

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FIT AND FIGHTING AT 40

Actor and stuntman Ron Sarchian reveals how he set a world record on his 40th birthday and remains in top shape.

by Stephanie Starr • photos Courtesy Ron Sarchian, Marsha Posner and Carla Zeitlin

Actor and stuntman Ron Sarchian might make a living off his handsome face, but he set a record with his fists. The day of his 40th birthday Sarchian completed 36 hours and 3 minutes straight of beating the living day-lights out of a punching bag. He threw a total of 100,000 punches, cementing his position as a new Guinness World Record holder. He actually beat the old record by about 12 hours.

What, might you ask, possessed him to pummel a bag, and his own body, in what could only be described as an exercise in sleep deprivation, endurance and strength?

"It's somewhat addicting trying to break these records," says the self-described adrenaline junky. "And it did have a purpose. I raised nearly \$4,000 for the Lance Armstrong Foundation. Donations are still coming in."

Sarchian has always loved a good challenge and enjoys pushing his body past its limits. It's how he knew stunt work was for him. Born and raised in Detroit, Mich., Sarchian was an only child who kept himself out of trouble by joining the local Boysclub. On one group outing they attended a thrill show at the Pontiac Silverdome. Sarchian witnessed stuntman Dar Robinson leap from the top of the 200-foot Silverdome into an airbag. He was mesmerized. And hooked.

"Most of my idols, as a kid, were sports stars. I played football all through high school and college and always admired the guys that got respect by the way they hit and not how much they talked. Likewise, I also had a great deal of admiration for stuntmen like Dar Robinson and Bobby Bass. When my football career ended I became a stuntman."

Although he does have a Bachelor's Degree in Industrial Technology from Northern Michigan University, Sarchian was continually driven to seek out stunt work and athletic challenges. His first break came when he landed a part on

the pilot *Mr and Mrs. Smith* along side Scott Bakula. Since that time he has appeared in numerous films as an actor and a stuntman. His credits include features such as: *Bedazzled*, *Fighting for Survival*, *Serial Bomber*, *Dante's Peak*, *The 6th Man*, *Final Decision*, *Sleepless in Seattle* and *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle*. Some of his television credits include: *Star Trek: Enterprise*, *The Wayne Brady Show*, *World Stunt Awards*, *The Division*, *General Hospital*, *Nash Bridges*, *Murder She Wrote*, *Dark Skies* and *Simmon & Simmon*.

As his career progressed, Ron realized the importance of keeping up with the physical demands of his profession. These days an actor must learn to do his own stunts and do them safely. Recently he and stuntman Carl Ciarfallo created a new class called Action for Actors, which is geared towards teaching actors how to better prepare themselves for stuntwork.

"We start with basic fights and falls, and progress into more advanced action with wirework," Sarchian says. "It's a great workout and we end the class with everyone incorporating what they have learned into a believable action scene. You can find out more at www.actionforactors.com."

Nutrition

Sarchian's daily diet is high in protein, consisting of smaller meals and snacks, usually four to six times a day, depending on if he is training or not.

Daily Diet

Morning (8 to 10am): Egg whites, oatmeal, fruit, juice, coffee, water.
Snack (10 to 12pm): Balance bar, banana, water.
Lunch (12 to 3pm): Salad w/chicken, cottage cheese, green tea.
Snack (3 to 5pm): Vegetables, protein drink, water.
Dinner (5 to 8pm): Vegetable lasagna, small salad, green tea, water.

Favorite cheat foods: Usually munchies such as chips, popcorn, ice cream and an occasional soda or beer.

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Ron Sarchian on the day of the world record-breaking event. I punched this bag for just over 36 hours straight.

Workout Routine

Sarchian started working out at a young age. Career aside, he knows the benefits of staying in good shape. Of course, when your job calls for you to jump out of a flaming building or from a speeding car, it helps if you keep your body in top physical condition.

Busy as always, he ends up doing five to six hours of cardio a week in some form or another: spinning, running, elliptical, hiking, stairs, lots of cross training, etc. Twice a week he does Core training and then implements resistance training into his program two to three times a week.

"Balance," Sarchian says, "is the key to getting in shape. Eat well, exercise often and be happy with the way you look. Have fun with the process along the way. Train smarter, not harder, and learn as much as you can along the way."

The 6'1", 215-pound actor loves to shock his body on a regular basis just to see how it will adapt. By keeping a positive attitude and an open mind, he seeks to learn from the success and failure of others, while building upon his own experience. His general philosophy on fitness is to take responsibility for your own goals.

"Stop making excuses. I know that if I'm not able to workout on a regular basis I don't feel good about myself and that carries over into other areas of my life."

Not one to stay still for too long, Sarchian even incorporates

physical activity into his playtime. His hobbies include such activities as SCUBA diving, martial arts, skydiving and carpentry. He loves outdoor sports and plays every chance he gets. In fact, it is his social attitude that has contributed to his professional success as well.

Sarchian's Tips To Get Started In Hollywood

"A career in stuntwork and acting can be very difficult if you aren't with the in crowd or right people. It's really about who you know in this town."

1. Figure out what you want to do and do it. There are many different options out there, look at everything available and then make a plan of action.
2. Find a niche. Sarchian made himself available as a guy who could do both dialogue and stunt work. By adding to his list of abilities, he has given himself more opportunities to succeed.
3. Put yourself out there. Get experience and recognition. Get into a class or work on low-budget films or theater. Do voice-overs or build sets, but do something. You need to be entrenched in the industry and build up relationships.
4. Grow a thick skin. If you can't take criticism this isn't the industry for you. Learn to not only handle rejection, but learn from it.

Ron currently lives just outside of Los Angeles where he works as a spinning and kickboxing instructor in addition to his acting and stunt career. To learn more about Ron, check out his website at www.RonSarchian.com or www.actionforactors.com.