

**SPEND LESS + SWEAT MORE = SUMMER FUN**

STRONGER, FASTER, BETTER

# Men's Health

Mark Wahlberg's

**NO QUIT**

**GUIDE**

to **WINNING**

(and **CRYING**)

**10**

Simple Ways to **SAVE A LIFE**

**INSTAGRAM'S TOP TRAINERS**

**GET WILD!**

**25 OUTDOOR ADVENTURES**

FOR **BODY + MIND**

Make **HOT DOGS**

Your **SUPERFOOD**

Hack Your **Fat Hormones**

**SLEEP DEMONS**

ARE REAL

HOW TO **SLAY 'EM**



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It has not gone as planned. So I embarked on a self-isolated journey to see if virtual connectivity can bring us together.

Could screens be my savior? If I couldn't be together with anyone, could we at least be *together-ish*? And now, as we all emerge into a different world, what's the best way for all of us and our new avatars to live in peace?

## THE FIRST FEW DAYS

Early on, I staved off existential worry with a superficial one about losing my six-pack. Thankfully, the Workout from Home Movement is having a moment. There's Mirror and Tonal and others with energetic names like Tempo and FightCamp. I chose the familiar if upgraded version of an old college pastime with a rowing machine called the Hydrow.

Hydrow combines the theology of bike-based Peloton—there is a fitness god; you must follow this god's workout edicts—with the maniacal difficulty of indoor rowing, also called erging. When it arrived, my first workout was a quick 30-minute row in the canals around Miami Beach. Sunny climes in such dark times seemed profane, yet there was something uplifting about moving in unison with someone, even if they were on a screen and prerecorded.

Graham M. Jones, Ph.D., an anthropology professor at MIT who studies culture and technology, understands. "In a time when we're spending a lot of time alone... I think bodies moving in harmonious motion is a powerful engine for human sense of intersubjective connectedness," he says. Also, it was hell on my lats.

## AS THE DAYS BECAME WEEKS...

All human interaction now took place through the same 13-inch window on my laptop. I became very familiar with

my mom's chin. Conversations with my kids—Auggie, who is six, and Achilles, who is eight—consisted of small talk while my ex held her phone up to them and they stared into their iPads. "Hey, Daddy!" they said, then returned to building vast Minecraft worlds.

Unfortunately, I had a lot of angst. Fortunately, I had a therapist. Anyone who has been in therapy knows the rituals: Couch means safe space; neutral landscape means I can talk about my father. Skype therapy, however, is different. With a few beeps and boops, Julia, my therapist, was in my bedroom and I was in her... den?

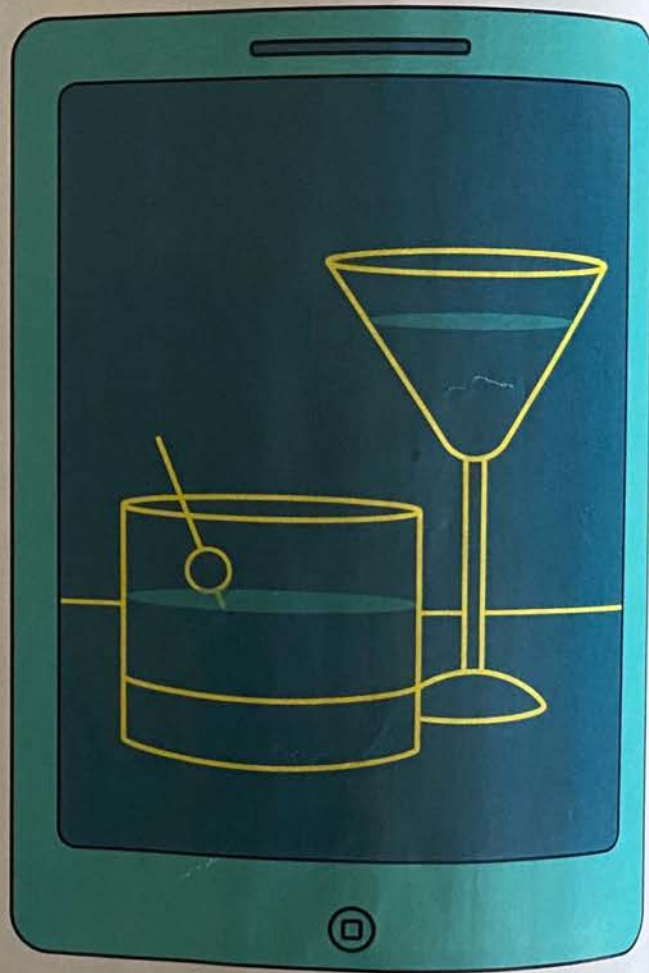
Most of the 45-minute session involved some variant of "Can you believe this shit?" As I closed the laptop, it occurred to me I hadn't really let down my guard for the entire session. It reminded me of a phrase I'd read about. In 2004, John Suler, Ph.D., of Rider University, coined the term "online disinhibition effect" to describe some freewheeling actions. "[People] loosen up, feel less restrained, and express themselves more openly," he wrote. This was due to six factors, including asynchronous communication (it's not in real time), invisibility (you can't see me), and anonymity (you don't know me).

But my emotional reluctance was likely related to another Suler finding: The Internet minimizes our sense of status and authority. Therapists. Celebrities. Late-night talk-show hosts. We are just human beings looking through screens at one another. Maybe that's not such a bad thing.

## AS THE WEEKS BECAME MONTHS...

Before the virus, a common trope on Hinge and Tinder was "I'm not looking for a pen pal." Now we were all pen pals by default. Former flames had been reaching out, goaded by a mixture, I imagine, of death-doorstep regret (maybe I *was* the one?) and boredom. I'd been WhatsApping with an ex living in Belgium. Thanks to the time difference, I'd wake up to steamy shots from Bruges.

I also scheduled a Zoom Hinge date with Svetlana, a Russian lady I'd met IRL once for coffee, back in the days when one did that kind of thing. After a few chirps, I found myself peering at her on my screen. She drank wine and did her nails. I drank Dalmore and watched while eagerly await-



## THE MVP SERVICES FOR POST-QUARANTINE LIFE

Social isolation pushed us all to adapt and find new ways to stay connected. Here's your *MH* guide to what's worth continuing in order to create a new (and virtually improved) normal.



### 15 Seconds of FitTok Fame

Amazing feats of fitness are all over the customizable video-sharing app TikTok. **Try:** TikTok, free. Download it to gawk, stay to upload and participate with your own (safe!) spin on the fitness challenges.

## FITNESS



### Real-Time Virtual Workouts

Apps that let you tune in live add more encouragement and accountability. **Try:** Peloton, \$13/month. The original crowd-pleaser is more essential than ever with boot camps, stretching, and meditation.

ing Suler's online disinhibition effect—maybe we'd skip steps and get racy—but, if anything, felt more constrained.

A chat with psychiatrist and *MH* advisor Gregory Scott Brown, M.D., drove home why. "We rely on human touch and cues for how to behave," he says. "Interacting purely online takes those away from us." I could sext an ex because we'd already seen each other naked. My new digital fling, though flirty, stayed chaste. Incidentally, Pornhub traffic in my household spiked.

I craved actual contact. So one morning, I tuned in to a live Hydrow workout led by Nick Karwoski, a chiseled golden-retriever type, both Adonis and Super Optimist. "Joshuadavidstein," he said when I joined. "Full name, bro. I like it." I blushed on my rower but thrilled at being seen, and pulled harder than I had in weeks.

Later that day, my kids came over for the first time. We hung out on the couch and I realized how much I missed their skinny legs and their now-longer hair and roughhousing and just being there to cuddle, even if they sometimes rebuffed me.

### AS THE MONTHS BECAME MORE MONTHS...

I'd been living mostly on protein shakes, black beans, and tuna melts. (My farts were the worst; on the other hand, only I was there to smell them.) Thankfully, with all the money I had saved by not doing anything, I could afford some help. I ordered a Thermomix TM6, a German-made everythinger. It braises. It sautes. It chops and has a score of other features, including Cookidoo, an app with a recipe-sharing "community" associated with it. I signed up immediately. I used to be leery of such things, but I'll take what I can get.

One day, I selected a recipe for creamy tomato soup and turned the dial to blend. Then I tuned in to a Facebook Live about no-knead bread making. The lady, named

Lynette, walked me through making hot cross buns. Even if I didn't have anyone to eat with, I had a friend with whom to cook.

This knob-twisting cookery felt like cheating. But the tomato soup was damn good, and my buns, when they emerged from my oven, were tight. Soon I was outsourcing everything from chocolate chip cookies to pizza dough to my little sidekick. The meal-prep community offered more support. Someday, perhaps, I'll wean myself off their suggestions and freestyle.

While Auggie occupied himself on the Hydrow, Achilles helped me in the kitchen on the Thermomix. It wasn't the same as having a picnic in the park, but somehow I felt our universe was getting a little bigger than the four walls of my apartment.

### AS THE MONTHS BECAME OUR NEW WORLD...

In the beginning of the quarantine, when I needed the most mental stability, I had found it harder than ever to meditate. Now that isolation had lost its novelty, reflective stillness beckoned again.

Like most houses of worship, my local Zen center offers Zoom morning services. So instead of rowing, some days I practiced stillness, knowing that in other parts of the world, others were sitting with me. If the chatter of fear and anxiety filled my mind, I'd nod to those thoughts and let them leave. After each closing chant, I'd shut the laptop and spend some time contemplating what's called *pratityasamutpāda*, or interdependent arising. Social distancing had left me more aware of both my aloneness and my connection with others than I'd ever felt before. Whether it was Nick on the river or Julia

**SOME SCREENS  
OBSCURE THE TRUTH.  
SOME SCREENS  
REVEAL IT.**

on Skype, Svetlana on Zoom or my mom's chin on FaceTime, these pixels shaped a real community. It was all I had.

Have screens saved me? Have they screwed me? Neither, really. They've been a mirror in which my own strengths and frailties have been reflected. It took months in isolation, a teleconferenced meditation session, a robotic German sous chef, and a fancy rowing machine for me to realize we are all in the same boat.

As I tentatively reenter the physical world, I'm staying virtually attached as a reminder of who I want to be out there. The Hydrow isn't going anywhere. Live-streams can remind you that there are so many others pulling together. The Thermomix will keep on purring, but I hope to have Svetlana over for hot cross buns. I promise I'll talk to my mom as much as I do now—we're both happier for it—and that when I visit Julia in her office, I'll hug the pillow and spill my guts.

Some screens obscure the truth. Some screens reveal it. The best are like windows. They are meant to be opened and climbed through, out into a new world full of old friends, more together-ish than ever. ■

### SEX/DATING

#### Remote-Controlled Sex Toys

Send your loved one some sweet vibrations to show you're thinking about them. **Try:** Lovehoney Desire Panty Vibrator, \$125. One of many discreet partner-powered options.

### THERAPY

#### On-Demand Shrink Sessions

Virtual therapy from your own couch or bed can be rewarding, and there's less wait time. **Try:** Talkspace, prices vary. Trade messages or a video call with licensed therapists 24/7.

### ENTERTAINMENT

#### Next-Level Friendships

Online hangouts have gotten an upgrade with Zoom-enabled multiplayer game modes. **Try:** Jackbox modules, prices vary. Download party packs to turn a group call into a virtual game night.