



Rick Ross: Weight- Loss Boss

The Teflon Don has dropped 75 pounds—but he hasn't lost an ounce of swagger.

By Michael Easter

It was just a day in the life of the “Goddamn Boss,” until things got very real, very fast. Rick Ross was in the air, flying from Miami to Vegas—private jet, naturally—when he suffered a seizure. “We had to make an emergency landing in Alabama so they could get me to a hospital,” recalls the multiplatinum-selling hip-hop artist and entrepreneur.

Luckily, there was no permanent damage. But the doctor had sobering news: If the 350-pound star kept it up—sleeping three hours a night, eating 24-ounce steaks at 4 a.m.—his next health scare could be his last. ▶



Rick Ross's goal isn't to build a cover-model physique. It's simply to become healthier and feel a little better every day.

Number one training rule in Rick Ross's gym: Always wear bling.



ROSS'S FITNESS JAMS

Devil in a New Dress
Kanye West featuring Rick Ross

Ima Boss
Meek Mill featuring Rick Ross

The Devil Is a Lie
Rick Ross featuring Jay Z

O Let's Do It (Remix)
Waka Flocka featuring Gucci Mane, Rick Ross, and Puff Daddy

That was in 2014. Today, Ross is living larger than ever, but he's doing it 75 pounds lighter and feeling better at 40 years old than he did at 30. "I'm happy," he says. "I'm still losing weight, and now I'm starting to build hard muscle in places."

And that's a hell of a feat, considering that only 20 percent of overweight people who lose 10 percent of their weight are able to keep it off for a full year, according to research in the journal *Obesity*.

Ross's secret: Focus on progress, not perfection. "I set my own pace, started slow, and made working out and eating healthier part of my lifestyle," he says. "If I quit all the things I loved cold turkey, I knew it would be only so long before I went back to my old ways."

That slow-and-steady approach runs counter to the advice you find in many crash-diet books, but it was exactly what Ross needed to improve his well-being. If you're overweight like Ross was, losing just 5 to 10 percent of your body weight over six months significantly reduces your risk of heart disease and other health conditions, according to the National Institutes of Health.

"My advice for anyone looking to lose weight is to not make it feel like a job," says Ross. Here are five effortless strategies Ross uses to make his weight loss stick.

Cheat—and Enjoy It

"I knew my weight loss wouldn't last if I never ate the things I love," says Ross. So he still takes down Checkers burgers and Wingstop lemon-pepper chicken wings when he craves them. The catch: He can only eat those foods between noon and 5 p.m., two or three days a week.

WHY IT WORKS Having cheat windows may not be an ideal weight-loss tactic, but the limitations help Ross make consistent progress. "For a guy like Ross with around 100 pounds to lose, you don't need to be too stringent at first," says Weller. "Look at what you eat and make it incrementally healthier over time."

Get 7 to 8 Hours of Sleep

With any more or less, research shows a significant association with weight gain. Ross was getting half that on a good night, thanks to his all-night studio sessions. "Those late nights are when I'm most excited and making hit records," he says. So the answer wasn't for Ross to sleep through his creative power hours. Instead, he compensates by sleeping in and taking long naps.

WHY IT WORKS When you're sleep deprived, your body's hunger hormones growl, says *MH* sleep medicine advisor W. Christopher Winter, M.D. "Ghrelin spikes, causing you to crave high-calorie foods," he says. "Leptin, the hormone that makes you feel full, is suppressed." That's why extra sleep makes it easier for Ross to stay true to his diet. Log eight hours at night, or add a nap.

Recruit Your Crew

"My buddies work out with me," says Ross. "That's our whole thing now."

WHY IT WORKS If your social network is on board with your goal and plan, you're far less likely to skip or slip, says Craig Weller, director of exercise at Precision Nutrition.

Pick a Few Signature Meals

Ross worked with a chef to develop five healthy, tasty dishes he could cycle through, like kale casserole, salmon, salad, and giant fruit plates.

WHY IT WORKS "People are most likely to default on a diet when they're busy or stressed," says Weller. Planning meals makes you less vulnerable to the lure of high-calorie foods.

Customize Your Training

"My workouts follow a CrossFit format," Ross says, "but I slow it down and smooth it out a bit." He does what he calls "RossFit" at least four days a week. He begins each workout with a jog, and then he and his friends set up five exercise stations and cycle through them for 30 minutes. A typical circuit: deadlifts, box jumps, medicine ball throws, row sprints, and pushups.

WHY IT WORKS You won't exercise regularly if you don't like your workout, says New York City trainer Brian Patrick Murphy. So if you have to, modify your program to make it more enjoyable. "I love that Ross warms up by jogging outdoors," Murphy says. "Getting out of the gym adds an element of fun and interest."

Grooming: Peter Graham; previous page: Ben Baker/Redux (Ross below)