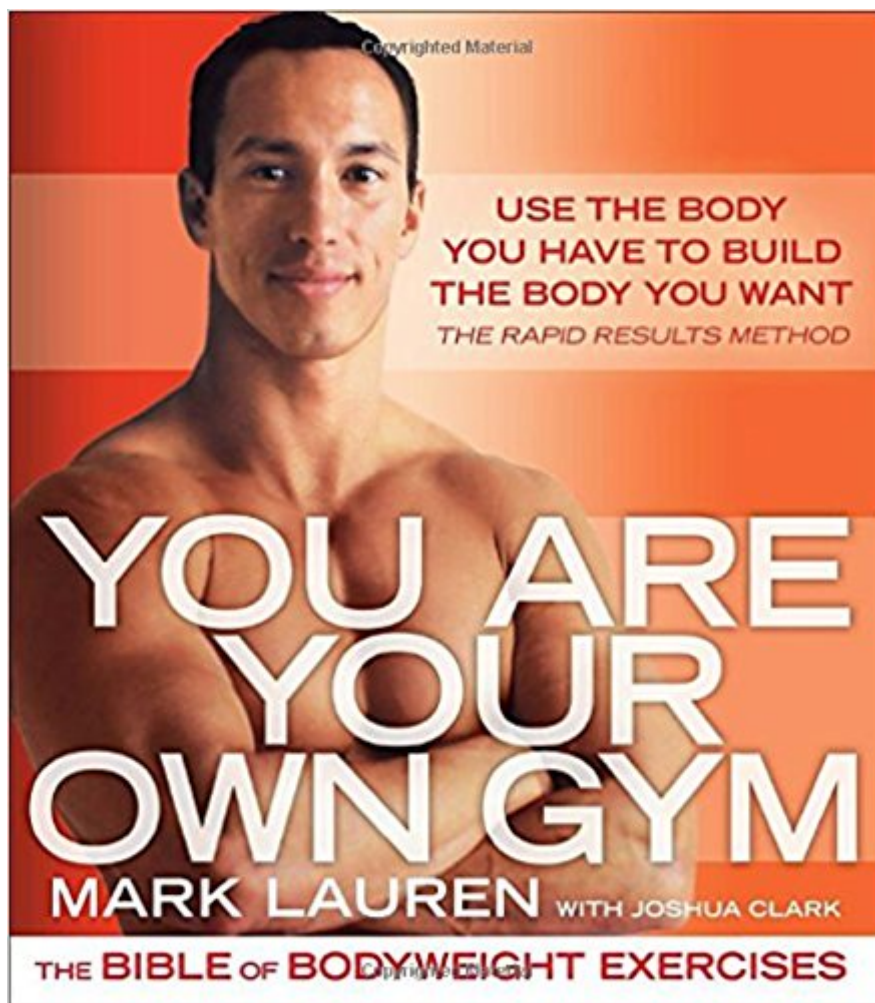


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# You Are Your Own Gym: The Bible Of Bodyweight Exercises



## Synopsis

From an elite Special Operations physical trainer, an ingeniously simple, rapid-results, do-anywhere program for getting into amazing shape. As the demand for Special Operations military forces has grown over the last decade, elite trainer Mark Lauren has been at the front lines of preparing nearly one thousand soldiers, getting them lean and strong in record time. Now, for regular Joes and Janes, he shares the secret to his amazingly effective regimen—simple exercises that require nothing more than the resistance of your own bodyweight to help you reach the pinnacle of fitness and look better than ever before. Armed with Mark Lauren's motivation techniques, expert training, and nutrition advice, you'll see rapid results by working out just thirty minutes a day, four times a week—whether in your living room, yard, garage, hotel room, or office. Lauren's exercises build more metabolism-enhancing muscle than weightlifting, burn more fat than aerobics, and are safer than both, since bodyweight exercises develop balance and stability and therefore help prevent injuries. Choose your workout level—Basic, 1st Class, Master Class, and Chief Class—and get started, following the clear instructions for 125 exercises that work every muscle from your neck to your ankles. Forget about gym memberships, free weights, and infomercial contraptions. They are all poor substitutes for the world's most advanced fitness machine, the one thing you are never without: your own body.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Mark Lauren puts the strength-training techniques of SpecOps into a comprehensive and easy to understand program that can be done by anyone, anywhere, anytime, paving the way for

anyone looking to get into the best shape of his or her life. •Gregory Peterman, sergeant, Green Beret •“Gain control of yourself through your own body,” says gym! •Mike Fisher, commander, 82nd Airborne Division; U.S. Army Ranger; colonel, U.S. Army •“Perfect for our mobile age of road warriors, this terrific book lets us carry around a full gym in our heads!” •General James Abrahamson, U.S. Air Force

Mark Lauren spent fifteen years as a military physical-training specialist for the Special Operations community. Now a sought-after personal trainer to civilian men and women of all fitness levels, a triathlete, and a champion Thai boxer, he is the author of the internationally popular body-weight bibles *You Are Your Own Gym*, *Body by You*, and *Body Fuel*. He lives in Tampa, Florida, and Phuket, Thailand.

I own *Bodyweight Strength Training Anatomy* by Bret Contreras, *You are Your Own Gym* by Mark Lauren, and *Your Body is Your Barbell* by BJ Gaddour. This review refers to the Kindle versions of each book. In short, I would recommend buying either the Contreras or Gaddour book; however, I feel the Lauren book is not worth buying unless you are collecting books on the subject. I would actually recommend buying both the Contreras and Gaddour books as they complement each other well. Neither book is perfect, but together they cover the topic very thoroughly. This review covers the following elements:

- Exercises:** Number and variety of exercises.
- Programming:** The sample routines given in the book as well as basic templates for building your own programs.
- Progressions:** Making a particular exercise easier or more difficult so a person of any level can benefit from the exercise as well as allowing progression in strength and ability.
- Educational value:** How well the book teaches the reader to understand how the body works and how the exercises work each part of your body.
- User friendliness:** How easy it is to use the Kindle book.

**Exercises:** All three books provide a large variety of exercises, however Contreras is the best here. My problem with the Lauren book is that it is not much more than an encyclopedia of exercises and doesn't do a good job of explaining why you should be doing any particular exercise. Also, he gives many of the exercises goofy, unwieldy names that sometimes don't help you understand what the move actually is. Gaddour only provides major compound movements and skips the core and isolation exercises. On the other hand, Contreras covers exercises for the arms, core, glutes and even the neck. Gaddour and Contreras both cover metabolic training and full-body exercises. Gaddour gets extra credit for an excellent chapter devoted to burpee variations, culminating in the Rolling Pistol Squat (a backward, one-leg burpee). In my opinion, this chapter is worth the price of the book (yes, I like

burpees). Programming: The Contreras book is the best in terms of programming. He gives you workout templates and suggestions for what exercises to use. The explanations of each exercise in the book will help you decide what exercises to select. He also provides sample "metabolic" (HIIT and MRT) workouts. The Gaddour and Lauren books only give you set routines to follow without much flexibility. However, the Gaddour book is better because he presents you with various styles of routines, such as for maximum fat loss, maximum strength, and so on. The Lauren book has little variety in the routines. Progressions: Gaddour is definitely the big winner here. In fact, I think this is the biggest strength of his book. He gives you eight basic types of exercises. With each exercise, he gives you five levels of difficulty. Within each level he provides three "microregressions" and three "microprogressions" that allow you to fine tune the exercise as appropriate for your skill level. Anyone who's ever engaged in strength training knows how helpful it is to progress in small increments. Contreras also gives examples of progressions and regression, but not with the detail found in the Gaddour book. Lauren is weakest here. To be fair, he does give ideas on how to make an exercise more difficult, just not as well as the other two. Educational value: The only area where the Contreras book is lacking in educational value compared to the others is regarding nutrition. Lauren and Gaddour both cover nutrition to some extent, whereas Contreras doesn't mention it. The Gaddour and Lauren books both have chapters devoted to exercise nutrition, the former written by a PhD from Pennsylvania State University. Contreras' muscle diagrams are outstanding and they really allow the reader to understand how the body works and how the muscles are being used. He breaks it down by primary and secondary muscles worked. I was surprised to learn how many upper-body movements involve the trapezius, for example. Contreras also does a good job explaining training variables such as intensity, density, and periodization. Lauren discusses these topics to a lesser extent. User friendliness: Lauren is last in this category. The book is laid out poorly. Although the exercises are organized by body part, the Kindle book does not provide links to the separate sections, as in the Gaddour and Contreras books. Lauren has an alphabetic index at the end but, particularly with the odd names he gives the exercises, it's difficult to find exercises for specific body parts. For example, if you want to find three exercises to work your thighs, you will have to go to the non-indexed Exercises section and flip through the pages until you get to what you want. This is a major headache on a Kindle. Contreras and Gaddour both provide extensive hyperlinking to get to where you need to go in the book. Contreras provides links organized by body part and specific exercises and he does

the best job here. Contreras strengths: Muscle diagrams Isolation exercises (especially glutes) Customizable routines Most user-friendly Kindle version Contreras weaknesses: No discussion of nutrition Gaddour strengths: Progressions Burpees chapter Nutrition chapter Gaddour weaknesses: No specific core exercises No isolation exercises Lauren strengths: Chapter on using household items to workout can be useful Lauren weaknesses: Poor Kindle formatting No full-body or metabolic training exercises No discussion of body mechanics If I had to recommend only one of these books, Contreras would win by a nose, with Gaddour a close second. This was a tough choice as they are both excellent books, but going by the "teach a man to fish" concept I think Contreras does a better job of explaining the topic such that you can design your own workout programs rather than merely following what someone else has shown you. That said, I highly recommend buying both of these books as each complements the other quite well. Combined, they're nearly perfect. Unfortunately, I cannot recommend the Lauren book since it doesn't offer much beyond the other two books. It's not a bad book, but there are better.

I have finally seen the light in regards to how important diet is and how effective bodyweight/plyometric exercises can be. Prior to using Mark Lauren's program I lifted heavy free weights at a gym but did not track my diet at all. The result was good strength but with a bulky build. I've been using this book and watching my diet for the past 3 months and the difference is quite profound. I went from 158lbs at 13% body fat down to 143 at 10% body fat. Plus my flexibility and core strength have never been better. I highly recommend giving this book a shot if you burned yourself out at the gym like I did.

If you ever wished you could find one resource that could help you make sense of the insane amount of ridiculous fad programs/diets promising the moon and fitness gurus all telling you "their" way was best, well, here it is. If you had no other information at all about physical health and fitness besides this one single book you'd have almost everything you need, and I'm not talking about average health and fitness...I'm talking about peak performance and fitness for a lifetime. The only other recommendations I could make a reasonable case for would be a decent book on flexibility training and a more in depth treatment of nutrition...for those, try: Stretching: 30th Anniversary Edition Eat, Drink, and Be Healthy: The Harvard Medical School Guide to Healthy Eating Lauren's credentials are beyond impressive. U.S. Special Operations operator, instructor of instructors, record holder, and pretty much bad\$@& of bad\$@&'s If you want the real deal; no gimmicks, empty promises, or bs...just inexpensive, convenient, easy-to-comprehend, straightforward, reliable, and

incredibly effective principles for achieving peak levels of health and fitness, this is as good as it gets.

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