







BY AMY LAWSON AND ALEXANDRIA LEMOS PHOTOS BY SHANE GERAGHTY

hat makes comic books and superhero movies so appealing? doesn't really exist? Kenny Santucci may have figured it out. "Superheroes are always faster and stronger than the averSantucci may be best known for his time as a reality star on MTV, labeled as Mr. Beautiful while competing on

> nine seasons of The Challenge. His resume is impressive; he's hosted shows on MTV, VH1, and TLC. With a headful of dark hair and a charming smile, this Italian seems to have it all together. What some of his adoring fans may not know is that Santucci wasn't born into a chiseled body. In fact, up until his freshman year of high school, Santucci would have been considered more of a cupcake than a stud muffin. That is, until he decided to turn himself into his

Young children obsessed with the supernatural strength and abilities of



the characters: they can fly, shoot lasers, and defy death. It is understandable that young people would want to emulate these saviors of the world. But why do we never seem to get past our desire to become a superhero? Unlike Santa Claus or the Tooth Fairy, humans of all ages cannot seem to overcome their

fascination with

what they know to

are

be fictitious characters. Why do we still want to become something we know age person," Santucci stated. "Striving to be your own superhero is so fulfilling."

own superhero.

WODTALK.COM April 2016 "Growing up a fat kid, fitness has been the most positive thing in my life," Santucci revealed. Reaching 220 pounds as a freshman, he recognized it was time for a change. He wanted to change from "The Cup Cake Kid" to something more respectable. Santucci turned to sports and fitness to transform his life and found great success in wrestling at both the high school and collegiate level. No longer the fat kid, he journeyed on to

become a beloved fixture on MTV's The Challenge, winning three times as he excelled in endurance events. Not what you would expect from a formerly overweight child.

While many people tend to turn inward when approached with fame, Santucci has done quite the opposite. Now a co-owner of Cross-Fit GSP and coach at the preeminent CrossFit Solace Manhattan, he continues to develop himself and others into the superheroes that

they desire to be. Using #teambeautiful on all of his social media posts, Santucci strives to help the world see that the "true beauty in someone is when they are making themselves better or helping others become better. That's what it means to me to be beautiful." He works to inspire people to seek out the super strength they may have buried underneath their insecurities. Santucci's personal philosophy is that "iron sharpens and iron," and constantly reminds his clients, friends, and the world of the importance of surrounding yourself with people who lift you up and make you better. His enthusiasm in helping others improve and become something they thought they never could be defies the reality star stereotype and more directly reflects the best of the CrossFit community.

Always looking for the next adrenaline rush, Santucci found it in CrossFit. His journey with CrossFit began five years ago when a trainer friend invited him to partake in a workout "as fast as possible." He said that the workouts themselves were not what was different; it was the belief system and the community that truly made it special. Santucci has immersed himself into the group by using his talents to serve as both a





Reebok Ambassador, Fit Aid Morning Show host, and competition emcee. Most recently, he's using his talents and knowledge to develop programming for Body by Solace. This unique class takes the concepts of CrossFit, removes the barbell, and progresses the athletes in strength and conditioning. His athletes use kettlebells, dumbbells, rowers and their own body weight to increase their fitness. It's part bootcamp, part CrossFit and all challenge.

An often discussed question in this extraordinary community is the effect of different diets on workout and fitness success. Santucci appears to be the epitome of fitness, and one would assume his dedication in the gym is mirrored with dedication in the

kitchen. When asked if he follows any specific diet, Santucci openly admits that he "adheres to the diet 'Kenny eats what Kenny likes'. It's a strict diet of doughnuts, cheeseburgers, and coffee as often as possible. I don't recommend that diet for everyone, but it's my personal favorite. You can keep your quinoa salad; I'll just work out harder." Santucci emphasized that it is important to have guidelines to help you reach your goals,

but following a diet so strictly that it causes you to no longer be able to enjoy your life or go out for a night with family and friends is not worth it. Life is meant to be enjoyed.

Santucci has proven that life can be lived to the fullest surrounded by those who make vou better. He is his own superhero who has fought many battles in life and won. Now this superhero is using his powers to influence the fitness community. Santucci is helping the world

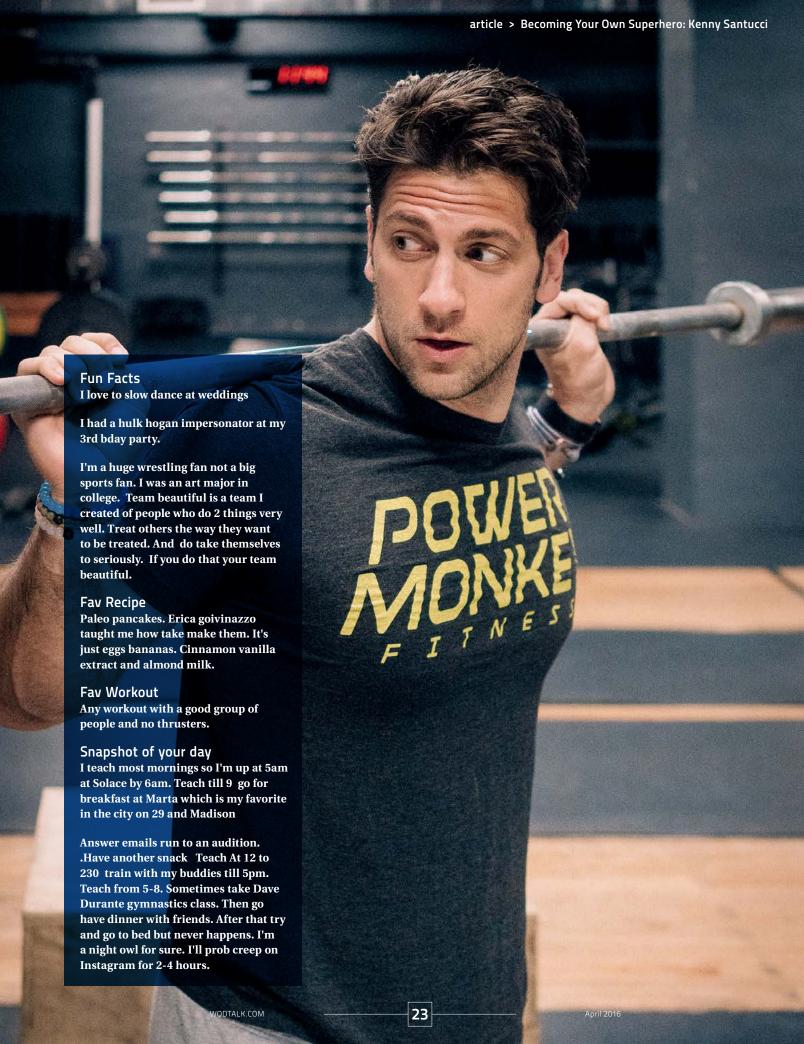
realize that their dreams can come true; the power to become their own superhero lies within themselves.

Greatest Achievement?

Creating something from nothing. In high school Santucci developed from not being an athlete to winning his wrestling's district championship to competing in college. As a young adult, he walked into an open casting for MTV's The Challenge and not only earned a spot on the show, but also was asked back multiple times, winning 3 seasons of his appearances.

Best Advice Received?

"Somebody's going to do it great. Why not you?" from his big brother.





Best Advice Given?

Trying to perpetuate the concept of #teambeautiful—it's about helping people become comfortable in their own skin. Growing up he was a fan of

pro wrestling, when guys like Ric Flair were flashy and bold, loudly telling everyone how great they were. And they were never as good as they claimed to be, but they believed in themselves. They

were comfortable in their own skin, and it didn't matter what anyone else said about them.

Biggest Inspiration?

"My parents — I admire the hell out of them." He says anything they've done for the last several years has revolved around him and his siblings.

Favorite workout?

He loves anything with snatches, especially a good EMOM. He voices what many of us feel about our weak area that we constantly work on: "I used to really suck at snatches, but I've improved, so now I'm just bad at them."

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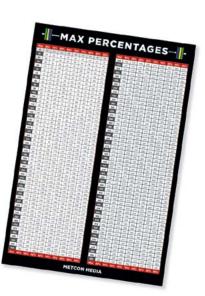
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