

# Abs—



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BY WENDY RUBICAM

PHOTOS BY BOBBY QUILLARD OF QUILLARD INC.

# Awesome

Parker Young, Valley native and rising star on ABC's hit comedy, *Suburgatory*, shares his secrets for camera-ready abs and staying in amazing shape

Parker Young has just gotten a script that calls for his character, high school jock Ryan Shay of ABC's popular Wednesday night comedy, *Suburgatory*, to take off his shirt. That's all the motivation the 24-year-old actor needs to head to his CrossFit gym and ramp up the workouts. Young has always been athletic—captain of his varsity football team in high school while maintaining a straight A average—and admits that he needs regular exercise to burn off energy. But, showing off his body in front of millions of viewers from week to week has added a whole new reason to stay in peak condition. "I can definitely tell that my motivation varies depending on whether or not I know that I have a shirtless scene," he confesses. "Being on a TV show where my shirt comes off and I have to play this high school kid, I have to be aware of how my workouts are affecting my body and how my diet is affecting my body because I have to look a certain way."

So how does an actor maintain a body worthy of showing off on camera?





# Parker Young

Actor—ABC's *Suburgatory*

**Age:** 24

**Stats:** 5'11", 160 lbs.

**Workout of choice:** CrossFit or Speedx Cardio

**Workout Frequency:** Shoots for five CrossFit workouts per week. Will do three workouts and a couple of short runs if he's short on time, or squeeze in a lunch-time workout at the Warner Bros. gym. "If I know I have to be shirtless, I make the time. I make it happen."

**Fitness Secret Weapon:** Pre-workout shake made from 1/2 apple, a frozen banana, kale and broccoli. "I just bought a Vita-Mix like three days ago and it's like my new girlfriend. I love this thing!"

**What He Eats:** Eats mostly fruits, vegetables, nuts and post-workout whey protein shakes during the day. Eats one large meal at night: salad with goat cheese, avocado, cranberries, walnuts and grilled salmon on top; soup—like a cauliflower puree; fresh veggies; followed by peanut butter or almond butter.

**Food Weakness:** Loves a good cheeseburger every now and then, but can't get enough peanut butter. "My obsession with peanut butter—nothing beats that. I think I need the fat. My body craves it." Grinds his own nut butters (sometimes mixed with chocolate) at Whole Foods.

**Fitness in a Relationship:** "It's more important to me that [a significant other] is happy and confident, and if fitness helps that then I support it. I normally take my fitness more seriously than my significant other would, but it's important to stay active."

Young will tell you that it requires dedication, but he is also a huge fan of CrossFit workouts. "This is one of the few workouts that I've found that doesn't feel like a workout," he says enthusiastically. "You're going in there and every day you're challenging yourself and becoming an all-around better athlete and just a more fit, strong, flexible, athletic individual."

For those who aren't familiar with the CrossFit craze, what started out as a handful of gyms in 2005 has now grown to over 3,000 CrossFit gyms that post daily workouts (WODs) that are short, intense routines designed for total body fitness. According to CrossFit, "Our program delivers a fitness that is, by design, broad, general, and inclusive. Our specialty is not specializing. The CrossFit program is designed for universal scalability, making it the perfect application for any committed individual, regardless of experience."

Young describes the CrossFit workout as "really competitive athletic movements" and says, "You work in teams, you're racing the clock and there's a competitive energy to it. I just love everything about it." He says the WOD can include anything from sprints to rope climbs, pull-ups, deadlifts, squats and burpees. "One of the cool things about CrossFit is that it's always changing. You never really do the same thing twice unless you're doing it in order to compare how much better you've gotten," Young explains.

Young discovered CrossFit at the same gym where he was training in mixed martial arts about a year and half ago, and has loved it ever since. "I was going through a breakup and started fighting as a way to keep my mind busy," he says. "I realized that CrossFit was just as good an exercise—actually better—and I don't have to worry about getting bloody noses from getting hit in the face, so it worked better for me," he says, laughing.

Combining CrossFit with Speedx workouts, which incorporate similar movements but with lighter weights and more repetition, has given Young the on-camera results he feels he needs to have. "For me, CrossFit hits all of my muscles. It feels like every day I go in there I'm working every single muscle group in a different way, with different weights and different exercises," he says. "I'm not developing a 'gym body'—I'm more just doing full body athletic

movements and as a result I look like an athlete, which is kind of how I want to look on the show without getting too big."

Most CrossFit devotees subscribe to the Paleo diet, but Young admits that he's not a huge meat eater, preferring fish and sometimes chicken for protein. "I think eating a ton of meat tends to make you bulkier all around, and I don't necessarily think it's best for on-camera," Young says. He explains that he prefers a program he discovered called The Warrior Diet, which feels more natural to him. "The idea is that warriors going into battle wouldn't fill up on a big meal prior because it would weigh them down and make them sluggish and heavy. They would just graze

on fresh fruits and vegetables and small amounts of protein throughout the day and then at night have their big celebratory feast," he says.

Young says it works for him because he burns the majority of his fat during the day and then has "an abnormally, awesomely large meal" at night. "I'm not eating a lot—I'm just eating enough to sustain my

energy levels, then at night I have my big meal. I feel like it's the leanest I've ever been when I stay true to this type of eating regimen," he explains.

If this all sounds super-intense and hardcore, don't be fooled. Young is thoroughly enjoying his way of life. Taking a gamble after finishing high school by heading to L.A. to pursue his love of acting has paid off for the Arizona free spirit. Shooting, which can start at 7 a.m. and go on until late at night, keeps him busy, but when he does have free time he hangs out with one of his Arizona high school buddies who's recently moved to the beach, hikes, or tries to catch up on his own favorite TV shows. He recently bought a guitar and jokes, "In my free time I'm busy driving everybody within 50 feet of me insane, trying to learn to play the guitar."

Young seems to be one of those people who is naturally energetic and upbeat, loving his work and castmates. "Oh my gosh, they're so amazing. It's so much fun," he exclaims. He goes on to say that he's happy with where he is right now, "I feel so grateful to be a part of this show. People are watching it and enjoying it and I hope it continues to be something that I get to work on for some time."

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