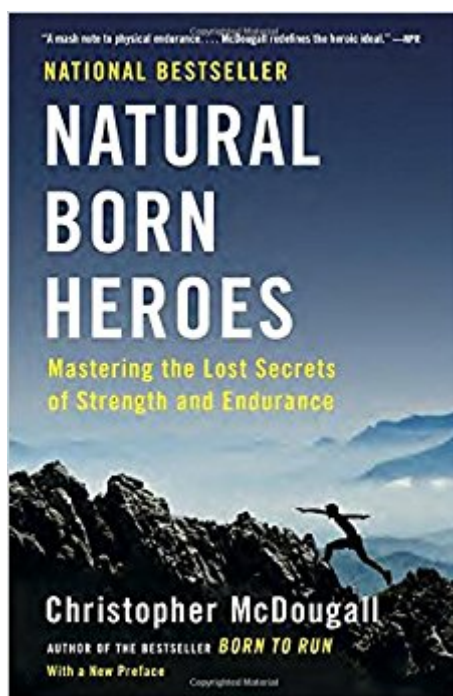


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# Natural Born Heroes: Mastering The Lost Secrets Of Strength And Endurance



## Synopsis

Christopher McDougall's journey begins with a story of remarkable athletic prowess: On the treacherous mountains of Crete, a motley band of World War II Resistance fighters—an artist, a shepherd, and a poet—abducted a German commander from the heart of the Axis occupation. To understand how, McDougall retraces their steps across the island that birthed Herakles and Odysseus, and discovers ancient techniques for endurance, sustenance, and natural movement that have been preserved in unique communities around the world. His search takes us scrambling over rooftops with a Parkour crew in London, foraging for greens with a ballerina in Brooklyn, tossing heavy pieces of driftwood on a Brazilian beach with the creator of MovNat—and, finally, to our own backyards. *Natural Born Heroes* will inspire readers to unleash the extraordinary potential of the human body and climb, swim, skip, throw, and jump their way to heroic feats.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“A mash note to physical endurance. . . . McDougall redefines the heroic ideal, establishing heroism as a skill set rather than a virtue. . . . [And] schools the reader in the art of the champion. . . . The essential narrative here, the twisty tale of a kidnapping that incredibly goes right, is exciting. It is balanced out with the journalistic account of McDougall's entry into the world of the hero. His personal quest to “rewild the psyche” might seem an awkward fit with war storytelling. But under McDougall's sure hand the combination improbably works. Kind of like kidnapping a German general on an island swarming with Nazi troops.” —NPR Books  
*Natural Born Heroes* provides a blueprint of the essential ideas of how to move, what to eat, and the spirit in which to

approach our everyday lives. I connected with this book on a primal, emotional, and intellectual level, and have been profoundly inspired by McDougall's work. • "Laird Hamilton • Fascinating. . . . Show[s] that heroism not only can be taught • it can be mastered. • "New York Post • A fast-paced, enlightening tale of everyday heroes. . . . A victory lap for McDougall. • "Deseret News (Salt Lake City) • McDougall traveled to Crete to examine the physical and mental capacity of Greek war heroes [and] studied natural movement, endurance, and nutrition to understand how regular people are capable of extraordinary athletic feats. . . . We can all adapt the tools of the athletes featured in McDougall's new book. • "Real Simple • McDougall sets his rediscovery of fitness concepts against the backdrop of a great tale of espionage, kidnapping, and harrowing escapes. . . . The fascinating story provides anecdotal proof for the theories and, perhaps, the encouragement you need to try them in your life. • "Women's Running • A heady confection that encompasses, among other subjects, military history, archaeology, Greek mythology, neat ways to kill a man and ideas on health and fitness that might just change your life. . . . [McDougall] constructs a fascinating edifice of ideas . . . and eventually finds a modern-day hero of his own. But the pleasures of the book are as much to do with the fascinating panoply of characters, war heroes all, British, Commonwealth and Cretan, whose exploits contributed so much to Hitler's downfall. • "The Independent (London) • In the thoroughly absorbing *Natural Born Heroes*, which tracks heroism from the times of Zeus and Odysseus to the World War II bravery of a motley crew of fighters, Christopher McDougall makes it clear that . . . heroes, both ancient and modern, are not somehow supernaturally endowed after all. Indeed, they may come by their skills quite naturally. . . . His extensive knowledge of fitness training, nutrition and physiology winds artfully around a tale of superhuman resistance during the Nazi occupation of the Greek island of Crete. . . . [McDougall] solves this mystery with a witty eye for every detail, inspiring his own captive audience along the way. • "BookPage • Compelling . . . engaging . . . provocative . . . with inquiries into the nature of heroism. . . . True heroism, as the ancients understood, isn't about strength or boldness or even courage. It's about compassion. • "Kirkus Reviews • Riveting. . . . A well-done recounting of a truly heroic episode of WWII. . . . In absorbing detail, McDougall describes how . . . ordinary men who were far from stereotypically tough, battle-hardened warriors . . . trekked across tortuous mountain terrain while avoiding a massive German dragnet. • "Booklist

Christopher McDougall is the author of *Born to Run: A Hidden Tribe, Superathletes, and the Greatest Race the World Has Never Seen*. He began his career as an overseas correspondent for

the Associated Press, covering wars in Rwanda and Angola. He now lives and writes (and runs, swims, climbs, and bear-crawls) among the Amish farms around his home in rural Pennsylvania. Christopher McDougall is available for select speaking engagements. To inquire about a possible appearance, please contact Penguin Random House Speakers Bureau at [speakers@penguinrandomhouse.com](mailto:speakers@penguinrandomhouse.com) or visit [www.prhspeakers.com](http://www.prhspeakers.com) & [www.chrismcdougall.com](http://www.chrismcdougall.com)

McDougall's book "Born To Run" is almost like my bible. I have notes scratched in the margins and I re-read the book every other year to keep me motivated. I was hoping Natural Born Heroes would be the same, but the side narratives that I was so fond of in "Born To Run" have become way too frequent and confusing in this book. Great story, I do like the authors writing style, but I had a difficult time keeping track of present day, flashbacks, origin stories, side stories and historical narratives.

What a great mixture of history and athleticism. In "Born to Run" McDougall brought ultra-running and barefoot running to the public's attention. Here he introduces us to coaches who have don't take the mainstream path: Erwan Le Corre and MovNat; Phil Maffetone, the genius behind MAF training and coach of Mark Allen; Tim Noakes who has admitted his errors and now is leading the Banting revolution in South Africa; and more. Great looks at great coaches/sports scientists and woven well into the story of some genuine WWII heroes in Crete.

This book is highly entertaining. It will keep your attention all the way through. The book is a mash note on a variety of topics ranging from diet to parkour. All of these topics are tied into the main story, the battle of Crete during WW2. It tells of survival and endurance through the eyes of Greek resistance fighters. Overall great book!

This book takes various concepts regarding ancestral health and puts them into an easy to read and entertaining form that reads almost like a novel. There are no diet plans or exercise regimes in the book. But there are tidbits of information leading towards a place that leaves you wanting more knowledge. From the cholesterol myth to the scams of big name gyms to why we have been hydrating wrong, this book covers it all but not as a blueprint, but as a pointer in the direction to explore more. When you realize that our bodies have everything they need to be healthy without gym memberships or processed "low fat" foods, you start to see the light at the end of the tunnel. I have the Kindle edition, I will be buying hard-copies to give to friends and family.

I've read both *Born To Run*, and *Natural Born Heroes* by Christopher McDougall. Both of these books are some of the best I've read, and are also two of the most influential books in my life. There is a lot of fascinating history of Crete packed into this book, along with just enough leads into fitness and diet to get anyone started on the right path towards truly changing their health for the best. His casual mention of some current day heroes would have me putting the book down to run to the computer, looking up the mentioned youtube video, or the person's name behind the story, which makes the book even more entertaining, and provides new paths to learn and follow far after the last page has been read.

Great story about the kidnapping of the German general, with interesting, valuable information on how the Cretans and British guys did it, physiologically. What was new to me was the connection McDougall made to Phil Maffetone's research on heart rate zones. Every piece of cardio equipment in the world has these ranges plastered on the front, probably because of his research. However, I don't think very few people understand that the most important component of getting in that zone is have a diet that supports the activity. I was one of those until I read this book and then a bit more of Maffetone's blog. I was a cardio snob, but now see how to do it more effectively for conditioning.

Many diverse ideas brought into a fascinating tale which cover from diet to how the people of Crete probably changed the outcome of WW2 making the German army's late leaving to invade Russia which led to their repeat of Napoleon's demise just short of Moscow as winter snows and freezing moved in. Their diet allowed them to be such fierce adversaries, for example, running double marathons through the mountains without eating. Junk scientific research misunderstood the Cretan diet which has now become the Mediterranean diet espoused by supposed diet experts. In fact in fact it was the rigid fasting regime of the Greek Orthodox Church and the high protein and high fat diet is what made them so metabolically strong. If interested in this aspect read Nina Teicholtz's book *"Big Fat Surprise"* which details how the misbegotten science came about creating the Mediterranean diet.

Chris has done it again. Weaving multiple stories into a cohesive tapestry is his forte. It took me a chapter or so to get into it, but after that I was hooked. As with *BtR* his research has led me into more reading and a deeper understanding. Thanks to his work I have gained a much greater appreciation of the human body and of my own fitness and health. He reset my concept of what

'hero' means and changed my perspective on general fitness disciplines like parcour (sp?) and cross fit. I'm finding his logic reflected in other research and am glad he is using his voice to educating and entertaining

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