

SUPER MARIO

INSPIRED BY HIS *DANCING STINT*, SINGER MARIO BUILT MUSCLE AND KEPT IT | By **Brandon Guarneri**

Twenty-two-year-old Mario Dewar Barrett, better known as the R&B singer Mario, got his start as a skinny 15-year-old, with music (his 2002 cover of the Biz Markie track "Just a Friend") and movies (*Step Up* and *Freedom Writers*). But it was his stint on *Dancing With the Stars*, of all places, that really helped him grow up. Mario hit the weights hard to prepare for the competition, and once he started training, he couldn't stop. "Once you get into the groove of working out, it becomes a lifestyle," he says. "It's something that your body starts craving."

Today, with a new album about to hit stores, the Baltimore native is preparing

MARIO'S AB WORKOUT

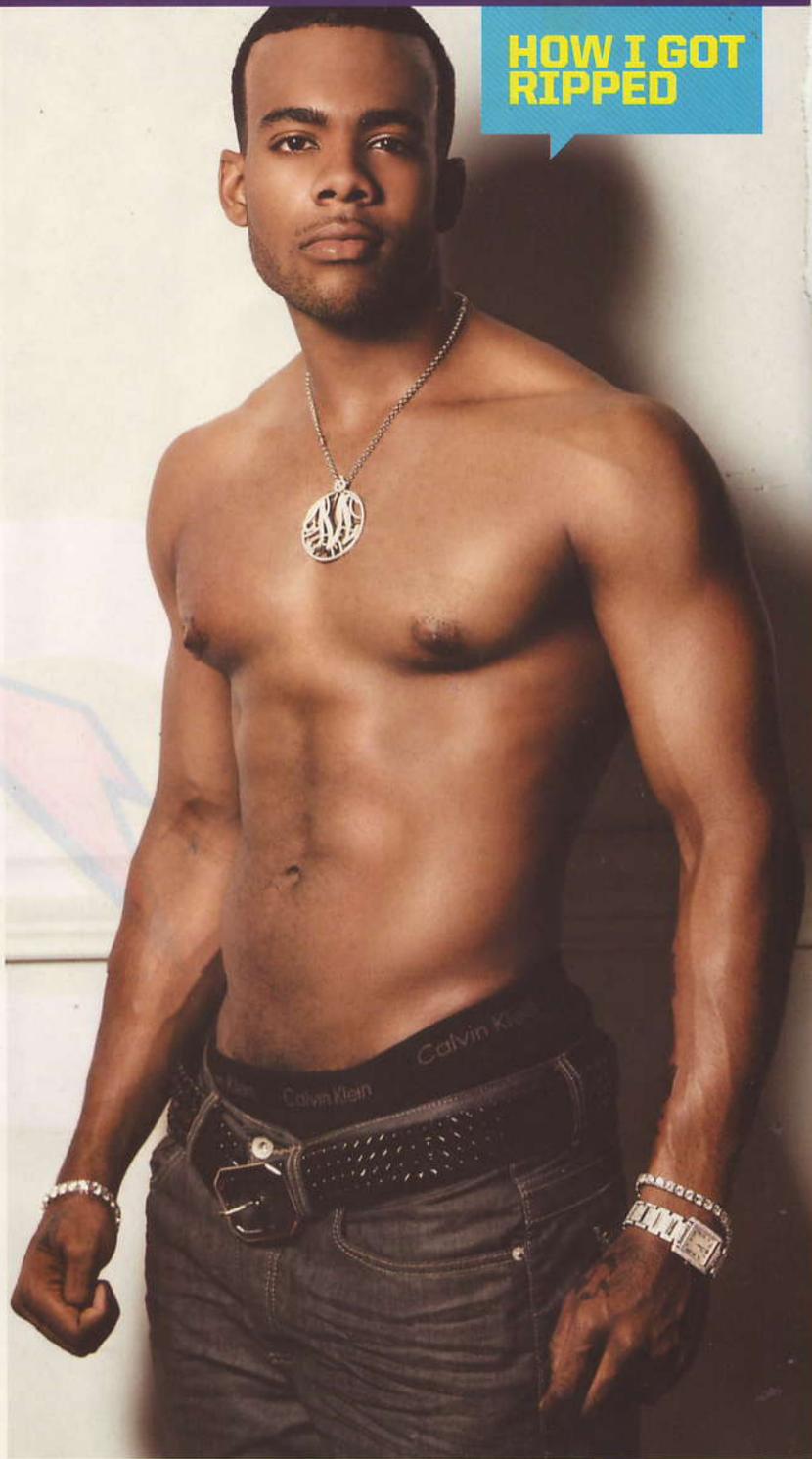
10 halfway crunches
10 full crunches
10 full situps

"That's one set," he says. "I do 10 sets, and there are no rest periods."

for the nonstop promotional grind. Mario's training program is made up of six-week cycles in which he focuses on either bulking up with heavy, low-rep lifts or leaning out with higher reps and more cardio. The singer splits his workouts into body parts, pairing chest with back, bi's with tri's, and a separate leg day for moves like deadlifts and squats. "My legs are hard to build, so I have to go real heavy," he says. Mario does three or four exercises per body part and two or three sets per exercise—but for that coveted "moneymaker" that makes the ladies scream, he says it's all about conditioning.

He might run three to five miles twice a week, or hit the elliptical, stationary bike, stairclimber, and treadmill in 10-minute bursts for a killer 40-minute workout. Clearly, Mario now considers his look part of his meal ticket. "There's definitely pressure for me to be a sex symbol," he admits. "I like to wake up in the morning and feel good about what I see in the mirror. It's a natural high that keeps me going."

HOW I GOT RIPPED



MY MOTIVATION SECRET

"The people around you sometimes work so hard and move so fast that health is easy to forget about. Eating on time, working out, making sure you get the right hydration. Working out for me is a way to stay disciplined when there's so much going on around me. It's my body, so when I have pressures to face—mentally or physically—that's what keeps me prepared to face those challenges."