

THE EVERYDAY ATHLETE

# Dr. Tom Hackett

## Orthopedic Surgeon/Swimmer

"I DON'T DO ANYTHING CASUALLY," SAYS DR. TOM HACKETT, A SHOULDER and knee specialist at the Steadman clinic in Vail, Colorado, and the lead doctor for the U.S. Snowboarding Team. "I focus so hard in surgery that it carries over into sports." For the former mountain guide, those sports include biking, snowboarding, surfing, and his latest passion, open-water swimming, with his ultimate goal being a swim across the 25-mile English Channel in 2011. Hackett's biggest challenge, though, is finding enough time to get outside. "During the week, I work eight- to 16-hour days," he says. "My swims often happen late at night. But it's absolutely necessary: The only way I can survive a job this intense is by playing twice as hard as I work." —STEPHANIE PEARSON

STATS

Age: 43  
 Height/Weight: 6-foot-1, 190 pounds  
 Home base: Vail, Colorado  
 Profession: Orthopedic surgeon focusing on shoulder, elbow, and knee disorders in pro athletes  
 Family: Single  
 Sports: Open-water swimming, surfing, ski-mountaineering, snowboarding, biking



photograph by JAMIE KRIPKE

Mind & Body

WEEKLY REGIMEN

MONDAY:

In the morning I jump rope, hit the speed bag and heavy bag, and do squats on my Indo Board for about 20 minutes. At night I swim anywhere from 3,000 to 7,000 meters, doing intervals of 20x200, 5x500, and 20x100.

TUESDAY:

I work out for 30 minutes in the morning on the Total Gym, the thing Chuck Norris endorses. Then at night I climb almost 1,000 feet on my hard-tail Rocky Mountain mountain bike. The pace is typically just below the puking stage.



WEDNESDAY:

I swim two to three miles in about an hour.

THURSDAY:

I repeat Monday's workout.

FRIDAY:

I mountain bike, climbing 8,500 to 11,000 feet. The mileage is less important than the altitude.

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY:

I'm pretty flexible on the weekends. Oftentimes I hop a plane and follow the waves, and once a month I'll do a pier to pier swim in Los Angeles, which covers about two miles of water.

ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT

Finis SwimP3 (\$150; [fnisinc.com](http://fnisinc.com)). I swim two to five miles in the outdoor pool at the Vail Racquet Club at 9,000 feet of altitude in the summer and winter, which can be monotonous. The key: I crank trance and house music. Repetitive beats help me get lost in the endurance groove.



VICE

Jameson. I love a glass of whiskey once in a while to take the edge off.

**Pain Management:** Occasionally I'll ice a sore joint, and I eat a lot of ginger because it's a natural anti-inflammatory.



RITUALS

I relax in the morning with five to 10 minutes on a balance board from Indo, looking out over Vail (*from \$110; [indoboard.com](http://indoboard.com)*). It helps with focus and fine-tunes my reflexes a little, which contributes to hand-eye coordination and steady hands — two things I absolutely must have in order to operate.



DIET

Lately I've been turned on to Vita Coco coconut water by some pro athletes and have been hydrating with half water, half Vita Coco (*vitacoco.com*). It has lots of potassium, which is critical for normal muscle and nerve function, and it helps offset some acids that build up in muscles after working out.

RECOVERY

I'm a big fan of no-resistance spinning done on a stationary bike for about 10 minutes after a workout. It really flushes out the lactic acid. For electrolytes, I'll drink a carton of coconut water. On top of that, your muscles need glycogen, so I'll sometimes eat a few handfuls of nuts with some chocolate milk. I don't really like milk, but it has a good balance of carbs, protein, and fat.