

# Doing Less, and Getting Better Results: How This Founding Athlete Mastered her 40s

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OCT. 2, 2026

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# Mary Ghorlani was burning herself out at work and in the gym. She tossed the old “wisdom” away to reinvent herself at 45

Mary Ghorbani was working out for almost two hours per day, doing as many as eight exercises per body part, pushing every set to failure. But in the mirror, what stared back were not the results she was after.

“I looked at myself and just felt exhausted. I saw something that didn’t reflect my training,” Ghorbani says of her then 44-year old self. “I wasn’t seeing the muscle definition that I saw in my 20s and 30s. My body seemed inflamed and tired.”

Like other “elder millennials” born at the start of the 80s, Ghorbani grew up with the “grind” mindset: Teen and fitness magazines and shows had told her that in the gym, more was more.

“I decided to re-tweak things and approach it in a different way,” she says. She went for less volume, more quality: The mother of two cut her workouts from six days per week down to four. She pared each workout down to core, compound movements that let her tax her muscles without exhausting her system. A year later, she’s completely changed her body, and more important, how she feels.

“My energy is through the roof. My sleep is much better,” she says. Ghorlani’s pouring that feeling into a new app, Lift Lab, where she hopes to help other over-40 women learn the same lessons and capture the same energy.

And she's bringing all that energy and the unbreakable mindset from her training to November's Super Age Games, where she'll be a Founding Athlete as a member of Team Timeline.

## Betting on Herself at 45

Before she changed her training, Ghorlani had been working in private banking for more than a dozen years. She was burned out.

"I would work out at 5 a.m., get to work, and I was already ready for a nap," she says.

So she quit. Then she bet on herself: She started trying to build a business around her passion for fitness. And while both the startup and fitness worlds are packed with youth, Ghorlani felt that her age would give her an edge.

At 45, "you're no longer looking for validation from people. I don't need someone to tell me if what I'm doing is right," she says.

She also had bonus advantages that have helped other middle-aged founders (like fellow Founding Athlete and **Rebellion Body founder Denise Kirtley**): Ghorlani had life and business experience. She'd seen ups and downs, put herself in tough situations and found her way to the other side. And she knew that every challenge was solvable.

"I knew the ropes. I knew I'd been there, and I'd done that," she says. "I think that's what's helped me excel."

## 5 Moves For Leg Day

Ghorlani also figured out workout strategies and foods that fueled her training and drive instead of draining her. After being scared off of carbs by the early 2000s diet crazes, she started eating the key macronutrient around her training, giving her the

juice she needed for big lifts. And she made lifting her focus: Three days per week, Ghorlani strength trains, starting with a lighter leg day, then doing an upper body workout and a heavier leg day on Friday.

“That’s where I saw the most results, when I stopped doing so much, and just random workouts,” she says. The double leg days, she says, are aimed at healthy longevity. And in each workout, she’s traded endless sets of countless exercises for a handful done with purpose. On her heavy leg day, for example, Ghorlani does just five moves:

1. 1 A barbell back squat
2. 2 A Romanian deadlift
3. 3 A traditional deadlift
4. 4 Reverse lunges
5. 5 A farmer’s carry or a set of walking lunges.

“I see the same people at the gym year after year, and they don’t make any progress because they treat it like a check box,” she says. Performing each set and exercise with purpose and focus, she says, has made a difference “fast.”

## **Crafting a mindset that’s Built to Last**

All those deadlifts should help Ghorlani with her grip strength at the Super Age Games “and her lunges and weekly hot yoga session (her fourth weekly workout) will help with balance. Even if her training gives her confidence that she’ll perform well, though, she’s relishing that certain events could be challenging.

“I love doing tough shit,” she says. “I want women to know that there is no ceiling for yourself. It’s OK to be scared of something that’s when growth happens.”

Growth, Ghorlani says, is what longevity’s all about in her life—growing her capacity to be stronger. Growing a mindset that keeps her resilient in and out of the

gym. And growing enough not just to challenge herself, but to challenge the conventional wisdom we all learned about our bodies.

“I can’t even put into words how much of my life was consumed by looking skinny. And now it’s just like, I want to go in there and be as strong as possible,” she says. And with her participation at the Super Age Games, she wants to help other women find strength in their bodies, and also in their minds. “Your mindset is going to carry you through all aspects and seasons of your life, whether you’re going through motherhood, career change, a divorce. Whatever it is, if your mindset is not strong, then nothing else in your life is going to carry you.”

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