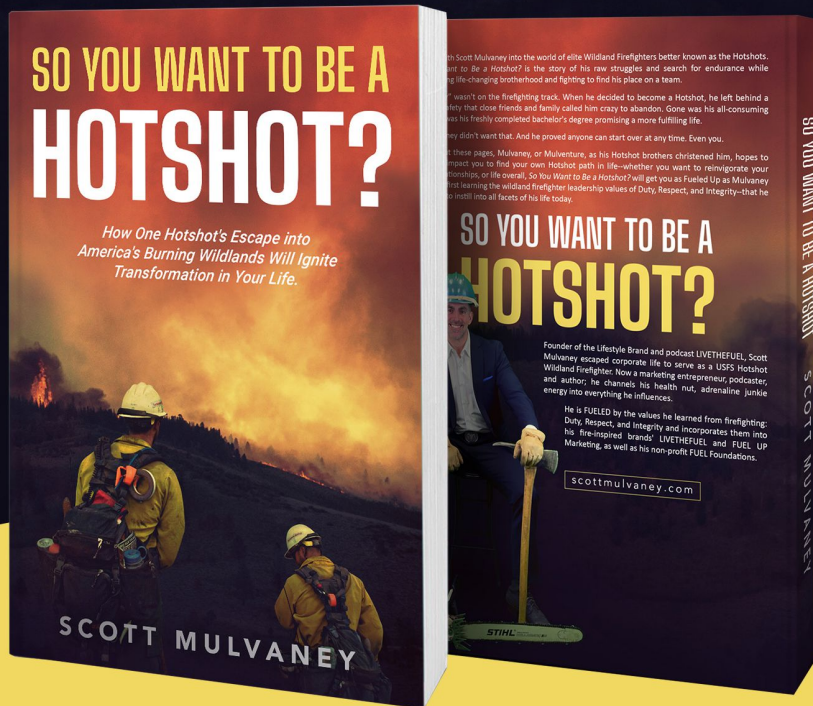


NEW BOOK

LAUNCH DATE **AUG. 27, 2021**

SNEAKPEAK CHAPTERS

Chapter 9 "Endurance Equals Results"



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FORMER HOTSHOT WILDLAND FIREFIGHTER
SCOTT W. MULVANEY

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CHAPTER 9

ENDURANCE EQUALS RESULTS

“Endurance is not just the ability to bear a hard thing, but to turn it into glory.”

~ William Barclay



At the end of the day, I found out that I had completed my test in 36 minutes—well under the 45-minute requirement.

That was a huge surprise! I was actually the first person to cross the line. I had assumed that other people had beat me and that they were all resting somewhere.

Because I had over-prepared for the higher weight, I crushed the pack test. I wanted to make sure that my instructors knew I'd done that because being a Hotshot was going to be a challenge. Without any firefighting experience, I needed to put as many positive chapters in my application book as I could. I needed to make sure that my potential superintendent could reference it in my job interview, and when he was reviewing my profile for consideration.

Remember, I was considered an old guy at thirty-one.

That was a ding against me, as was the fact that I had no firefighting background. I only had my experience with the fire academy, the pack test that I had crushed, and the great feedback from instructors.

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I was stacking the deck as much as possible.

“This was one of those moments in my life where my health, fitness, nutrition, and mental fortitude all tied together.”

It resulted in one of my best performances and times on my test day.

Smokejumpers vs. Hotshots

Let me pause to show some respect to the other elite crews—the smokejumpers. Their pack test is 90 pounds. They wear that and then skydive into fires with a helmet and a giant cage over their face. A smokejumper’s jumpsuit is made specifically for wildland firefighting, and their pack is tied off of them while diving to the fiery earth below. When they land, they have to get undressed and re-dressed and stow their dive suit into their pack. But they don’t just have the one pack. They also have a fire pack like Hotshots. Yes, they are definite bad-asses who deserve all the recognition they get.

Just Do It!

As a Hotshot, it is important that you put in the reps to have the healthiest body and mindset possible every single day. The reps add up; they build your endurance and condition your body to be stronger. A big part of our training centered around endurance. You are training to be ready for 16-hour shifts on the fire line. So, you better be able to hack it!

Up until that point, cycling, teaching spinning classes, and traditional

SO, YOU WANT TO BE A HOTSHOT?

weightlifting at the gym was the extent of my physical fitness and exercise training. When it came to nutrition, I didn't focus outside of your basic bullshit fitness magazine studies. Spoiler alert regarding those studies; they're all a waste of time because they're all sponsored by companies with an agenda who are trying to get their viewpoint and their products out there. But that's another story.

My training and preparation gear came from REI, and I had to make sure that I chose a backpack that could handle over 45 pounds month-over-month per year sustainably. This is why I recommend REI because you can try on backpacks and throw in sandbags and other weights to simulate what it would be like hiking with that gear—as well as you can make sure that you pick a proper pack that fits your body type.

If you want to do your own realistic weight simulation, you can use REI for that, too. When you go into their stores, you'll find a bunch of different sandbags. But before you snatch them all up and toss them in your pack, have their employees fit you to your backpack for general sizing—specifically, your hip straps and shoulder straps. Most people are surprised to find out that you can get different packs that run shorter and longer. Everyone's torso is different. If you're looking for the perfectly fitted pack before you head off to become a Hotshot, please go get it fitted. You want to be able to wear your pack for hours on end, and you will hate your life if it doesn't fit. Granted, you could just train with a weight vest, but then you don't have proper gear that you can repurpose for camping, hiking, and other outdoorsy pursuits you may not have fallen in love with yet.

Yes, the right gear has everything to do with how far you can make it.

After firefighting, I got into hiking 14,000 foot peaks. It was nice having a pack that fit me for those long days. If you're hiking a mountain all day long, you better have a pack that makes you feel good. Hotshots are issued a specially designed pack because you are bent over, striking the earth, all day long. This pack is designed to

ENDURANCE EQUALS RESULTS

keep all the weight at your hip, not high on your back like traditional hiking and mountaineering packs.

To prepare for my test, I loaded up my specially fitted backpack with homemade sandbags to ensure I would train at the regulation 45 lbs. or greater. I didn't use REI for this but made them myself by studying the ways of the GoRuck branded lifestyle. In the military, you hike and use rucksacks, aka backpacks. I thought my plan would suffice nicely.

My aim was to make my pack mimic the packs of the GoRuck training lifestyle. I wanted to punish myself to know I could handle what was coming my way.

When you make your ruck sandbags, you have to be patient and make sure you have a surplus of duct tape. You can make ruck weight out of almost anything—as long as you are wrapping a material that will match the weight of what's needed. Just wrap that sucker up. In my opinion, two of the best inventions in the world are duct tape and zip ties, also called wire ties, beyond Velcro, of course.

Still, I was a rookie when it came to understanding what was needed for the packs. I didn't know that sandbags shift around, and that makes practice training a complete pain in the ass. But I had no choice and had to use what was available. So, I took that pack with me to the academy and guessed my weight with the homemade rucksacks inside since I didn't have an accurate scale process at the time.

I just hopped on a regular home scale with the pack on and weighed myself. Then I took the pack off and weighed myself again, and subtracted the total weights. Sure, this might not have been the most accurate way to go about it, but I wanted to train with a little more weight than what the academy would ask for. I assessed that I put in about 50 pounds of resistance in that pack. So, I was off a little, but in the end, it made the training less punishing. I have no regrets.

At the time, I was living in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. We had a great

SO, YOU WANT TO BE A HOTSHOT?

rails-to-trails system along the river. It was actually not even a rail line but was a former Erie Canal towpath that ran along the coastal canal system along the Lehigh River. Many, many years ago, the canals transported food and other goods up and down the East Coast.

This was a great place to practice. I would put on hiking boots for some speed hikes and then rotate to trail running shoes to get my feet and legs built up on the longer distances for endurance testing.

Let me give you a warning before you go to the point of no return.

Your feet WILL get fucked in this job!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Scott W. Mulvaney & wife, Dr. Kristen Fenstermacher VMD,
at their ski wedding in the Canadian Rockies, 2019**

Founder of the Lifestyle Brand and podcast LIVETHEFUEL, Scott W. Mulvaney escaped corporate life to serve as a USFS Hotshot Wildland Firefighter. Now a marketing entrepreneur, podcaster, and author; he channels his health nut, adrenaline junkie energy into everything he influences.

He is FUELED by the values he learned from firefighting: Duty, Respect, Integrity and incorporates them into his fire-inspired brands LIVETHEFUEL and FUEL UP Marketing as well as his non-profit FUEL Foundations.

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