

## One Tough Mudder

Written by {ga=tommoore}

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The [Tough Mudder is a 12-13 mile obstacle course](#) designed by British Special Forces to test a participant's all-around strength, stamina, mental grit and camaraderie.

The worldwide event was founded by Will Dean, a former counter-terrorism agent for the British government. While working on his master's degree at Harvard, Dean created Tough Mudder because he was looking for a challenge that marathons, triathlons and other adventure runs did not offer.

Started in 2010 with just three races, there were 35 Tough Mudders held in 2012. The event has seen more than 700,000 people participate in a course that features anywhere from [25 to 30 obstacles](#), ranging from the Artic Enema, to the Ball Shrinker, Dirty Ballerina, Electric Eel and the Turd's Nest, just to name a few. According to the group's website, it is "the premier adventure challenge series in the world."

The group has also raised more than \$5 million for the Wounded Warrior Project by offering a discount off the registration fee for any participant who pledges to raise \$150.

Steve Roush, a 47-year-old from North Canton, will run in his second Tough Mudder when the event comes to the Mansfield Lahm Regional Airport on April 27-28.

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Steve was nice enough to sit down with us for a virtual Q&A about the experience of being a Tough Mudder.

### **Q: Let's get the big one out of the way first; why are you doing this?**

Steve: It is a nice way to mix up fitness routines. My wife, Halle, my friends and I do a lot of trail running and other sports activities, so this was a unique event. Plus, who could pass up the challenge of "The Toughest Race on the Planet?" Plus, free beer at the end of the race...

### **Q: Last year was your first time running the course, what was the most challenging part?**

Steve: The monkey bars and rings have to be one of the hardest because you are covered in mud (as is everything else) and they are slippery. Regardless of strength, it is hard to hold on to a muddy bar of steel. Also, going from running at half-mile increments into cold water (there's always cold water waiting for you somewhere) over and over again gave my legs some cramps.

### **Q: What was the most memorable part?**

Steve: The electroshock has to be the most memorable and is the obstacle everyone hates. No one likes getting shocked with 10,000 volts ... it feels like getting punched.

### **Q: Do you do any other extreme events?**

Steve: I have done five marathons and lots of thousands of miles on trails; I've also done some adventure races. With all the obstacles, the Tough Mudder is more like an annoying trail run.

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### **Q: Other than being able to run 13 miles, how do you train for something like this?**

Steve: Overall fitness, core strength, and basic exercises like sit-ups and pull-ups are a great start. Being able to pull your own weight over the top of a wall once you grab it is also very helpful (there are lots of 8- to 12-foot walls). You do not have to be able to run 13 miles all at once since you really only do a half mile or so at a time before you get to another obstacle, some of which require waiting in line. But being able to sustain forward momentum for more than four hours is critical. This is an event, not a race, and it takes a team effort to get through the obstacles.

### **Q: What does your wife think about this?**

Steve: She was at the finish last year cheering me on. This year she is joining me for the event. In addition to my wife, I've convinced some of our friends to join us this year.

### **Q: As this is your second time running the Tough Mudder, do you have any advice for someone who is considering running the event?**

Steve: Don't just jump off the couch and expect to have a good time with this event. I am not sure that it is the toughest race on the planet, but it can be challenging if you are not in half-way decent shape. But go at your own pace and have fun with your friends. And be sure to wear light-weight clothing and gloves.

Thanks again to Steve for taking the time to talk to us about the Tough Mudder – and good luck.

If, after reading this, you think you want to give the course a shot, there are still slots available for the Ohio run – [visit the registration page here](#) .