



# Atlanta Men on the Move

By Tiffany R. Jansen and Wyndi Kappes

**5** Atlanta men take leading a healthy and active lifestyle seriously and, as a result, have never felt better or accomplished more. They share how they make taking care of themselves a top priority and provide insight into overcoming life's many curveballs that try to get in the way. From sticking with a plant-based diet to setting a new Mount Everest record, these guys author a plan for every minute of every day. Take a page from their book. ▶

Photos courtesy of (top left) Rai Shlomo; (top middle and bottom left) Jermaine Middleton; (top right) Paul Cox; photography by Patty Geisinger.



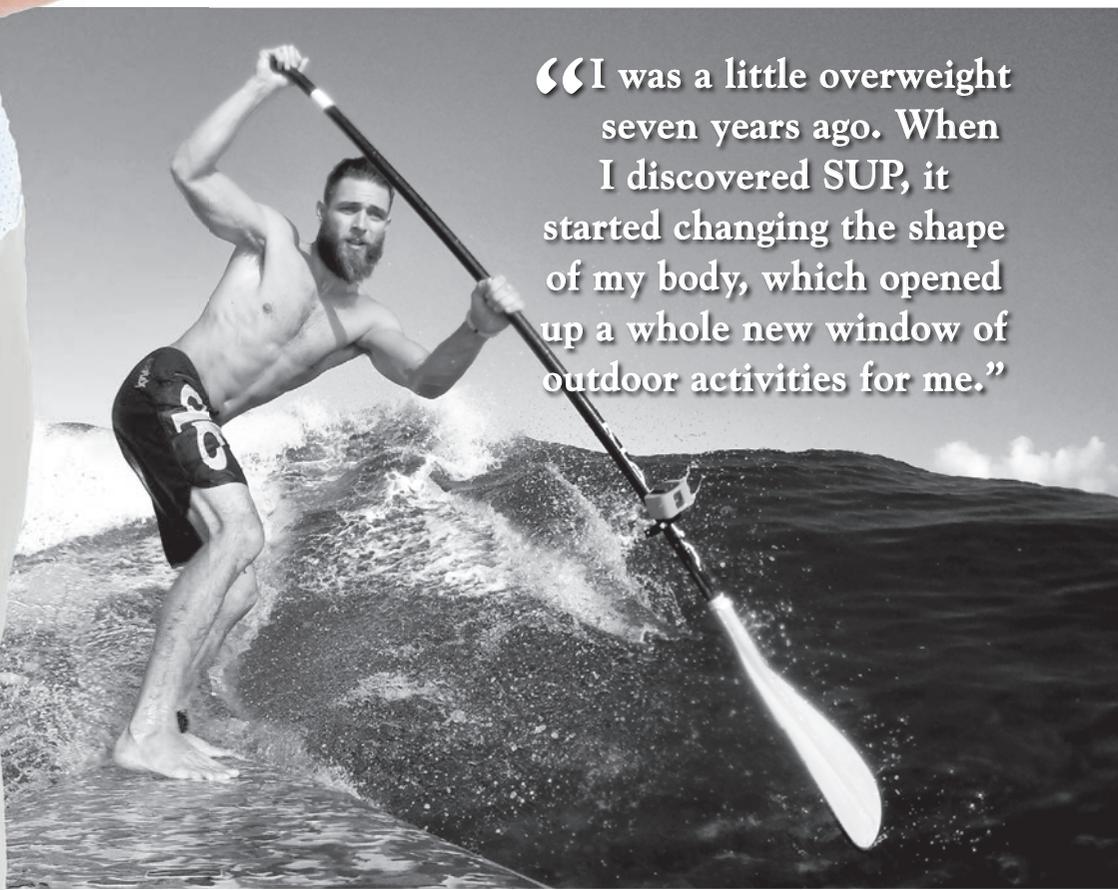
## Unstoppable Outdoorsman

Life for **John Sloan** has always been one big adventure. Beginning with a whitewater rafting trip at age 11 to breaking two toes while surfing on his wedding day, the excitement hasn't stopped.

The 32-year-old thrill-seeker is right at home sending people out on new adventures as co-owner of Atlanta-based outdoor gear and travel stores, High Country Outfitters. Since his workweek extends beyond the traditional Monday through Friday, Sloan has to juggle administrative work, exercise, and unwinding on a daily basis.

"Since I don't have the chance to recoup on Saturdays and Sundays (often busy days at the shop), every minute counts during the week," he says.

His favorite way to combine fitness and fun? Stand-up paddleboarding (SUP) along the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area. "It gives you a low-impact workout that leaves you feeling great the next day," says Sloan. "I was a little overweight seven years ago. When I discovered SUP, it started changing the shape of my body, which opened up a whole new window of outdoor activities for me."



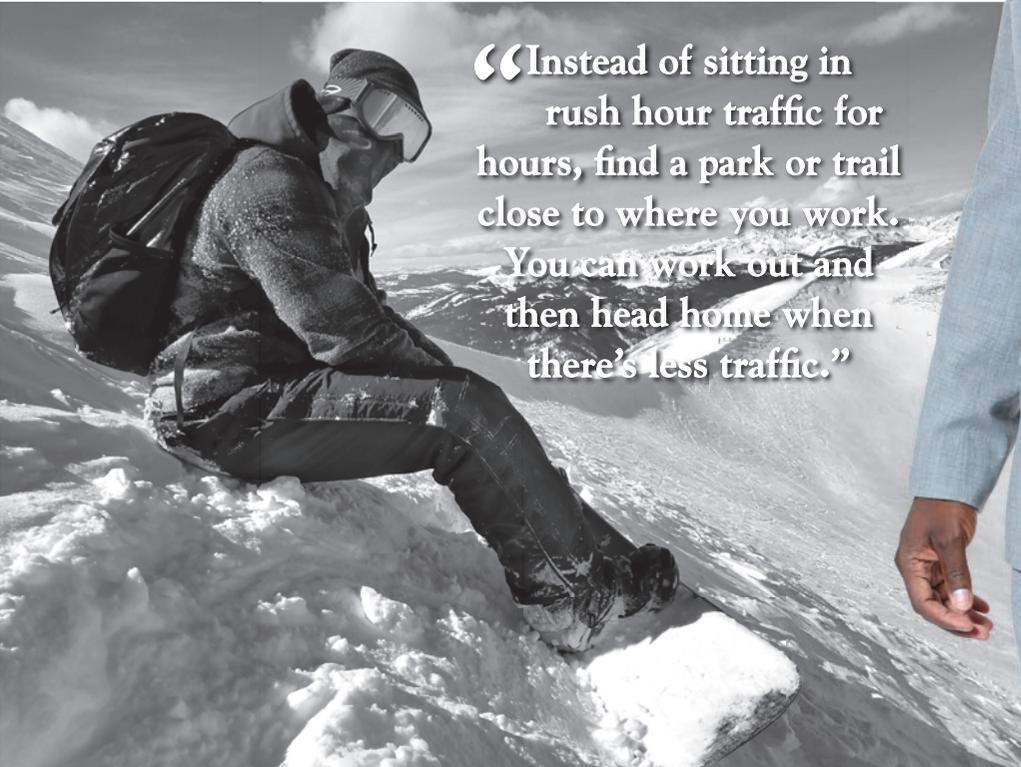
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While Sloan mixes up his fitness routine with plenty of activities (running, mountain biking, climbing), he admits that he sometimes falls into a fitness slump. His most effective catalyst for getting back into the swing of things—having a race to look forward to like the 100-mile Six Gap Century cycling ride through the North Georgia mountains he'll tackle in September. Plus, encouragement from his wife, Caroline, always helps. "If I've had an exhausting week, she will set up a run with a friend or pack the car with climbing gear and say, 'Let's go. We're having fun today!'"

# Everest Trailblazer

As a kid, **Jermaine Middleton** would come home after school and make a beeline past the TV to play in the dirt or rain. “I’m one of those weird people that just enjoys being physically active,” says Middleton. His usual exercise routine consists of two to three runs and two to three bike rides a week.

At 30, he’s been through Marine Officer Candidates School, raced motorcycles semiprofessionally, completed multiple half-Ironman triathlons, and is gearing up to become the first American-born black man to reach the summit of Mount Everest in 2019. Then it’s off to graduate school.



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Climbing Mount Everest has been a dream of his since childhood, when he’d spend hours watching the Discovery Channel and TLC. When it comes to making his dream a reality, Middleton is prepared to take his training to new heights. Before the death-defying feat, he’ll make practice climbs on mountains such as Kilimanjaro in Tanzania and Aconcagua in Argentina. He also plans to complete a full Ironman triathlon and two marathons. The event itself, Middleton is fond of saying, is the easy part. It’s the training leading up to the event that becomes increasingly more rigorous and, ultimately, unsustainable. “I’ll typically train between four and six days a week,” he says. Most days, that’s a swim, followed by a run or a ride. The weekends are reserved for long training days with 3-mile swims, trail runs, and 100-mile bike rides. An added motivator? One-hundred percent of the proceeds (minus expedition costs) for Jermaine’s climb will be donated to Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta, Atlanta Dream Center, and the Four Corners Group, Inc.

For the everyday person, the businessman offers this advice for finding more time to stay in shape. “Get an understanding of how you spend your time and look for areas where you can squeeze in a workout. Instead of sitting in rush hour traffic for hours, find a park or trail close to where you work. You can work out and then head home when there’s less traffic.”

To follow Middleton’s journey, visit [Summit413.com](http://Summit413.com). ▶



## Health Food Ambassador

Fitness has always been a part of **Roi Shlomo**'s life—from playing soccer and basketball as a youngster to hitting the gym in his teens to working with a personal trainer as the successful entrepreneur he is today.

“Thanks to my workouts, I’m more focused, I’m more clear, and it just mentally keeps me in shape,” says the 40-year-old founder of superfood café franchise Kale Me Crazy.

He admits there is sometimes the temptation to cancel a workout when life gets too hectic, “but once you stop, it’s so hard to get back into the rhythm.” The memory of how invigorated he feels post workout is often motivation enough.

In 2012, he saw the documentary “Food, Inc.,” which takes a deep dive into corporate farming in the United States. “I found out that a lot of the food I was eating that I thought was healthy wasn’t really healthy,” he says.



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He ditched the processed foods and began juicing, making smoothies, and cooking at home. “I was amazed at how much better I felt after incorporating real food choices into my daily diet,” he recalls.

Little did he know that the lifestyle change would result in a new career opportunity. “It was difficult to find casual places to eat out that offered healthy options. What became clear, almost immediately, was that a lot of people want to eat healthy foods but don’t know where to start and where to go,” Shlomo says.

He set out to change that with the creation of Kale Me Crazy. Today, the eatery has 17 locations around the country that reflect Shlomo’s own plant-based eating philosophy.

## Pound-Shedding Chef

**Michael Patria**, executive chef at Four Seasons Hotel Atlanta, has struggled with weight the majority of his life. But with a family history of diabetes and heart disease looming and his own tests revealing high cholesterol, hypertension and hyperglycemia, he knew it was time to make a serious change.

In early 2018, the culinary mastermind embarked on a journey to lose 60 pounds. "It was my resolution for the New Year," he says. "I realized that it was time to start leading a healthier life so that the same health issues that have affected my family would not impact me."

He started by cutting back on fried and high-sugar foods and limiting his intake of bread and red meat. Now, the 39-year-old fills his plate with fresh vegetables and lean proteins.



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"Portion control is a big one for me," Patria concedes. "When I first started the diet, one of the things I did was use a couple of different meal plans so I could see what their portions were like. I realized that even when I was eating healthy foods, I was eating too much."

Not eating after 9 p.m. helped, as did choosing more fiber-rich foods, like oatmeal, for breakfast, and adding grains such as quinoa, farro, and freekeh to salads and vegetable dishes to make them more filling.

Adding to the challenge, however, is Patria's profession. "It's difficult because you have so many bad foods available to you and my work schedule is very hectic," he says. Luckily, he can always count on other chefs in the kitchen to prevent him from doing something he'll regret later.

Patria also incorporated a new fitness routine with the help of his personal trainer, Steve Roberts, at Life Time Athletic Sandy Springs.

Roberts also conducted a metabolic test, which was crucial for Patria to understand how to most efficiently and effectively burn fat while building muscle.

The culinarian has already dropped 35 pounds since February and is hoping to hit the 60-pound mark by the end of 2018. ▶

Photography by (right) Brian Reeves, Perfect Day Photos; (middle) McSquared Public Relations.



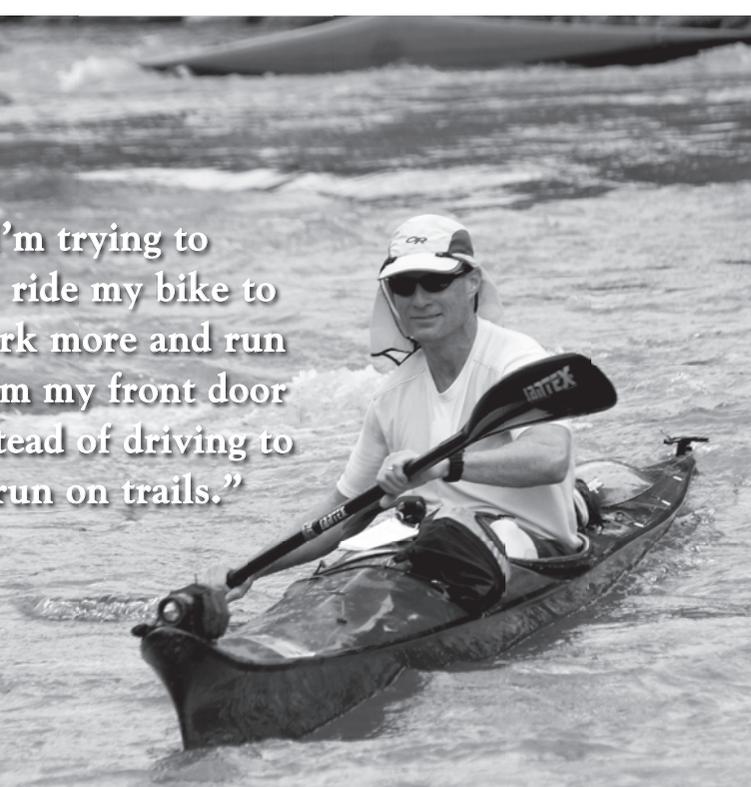
## Fitness-Focused Father

Juggling the responsibilities of a husband, father, and a demanding job means **Paul Cox** often has to get creative when it comes to keeping active. “I’m trying to ride my bike to work more and run from my front door instead of driving to run on trails,” he says.

He’s a big proponent of planning ahead and has found seemingly little things like setting exercise clothes out the night before and keeping a pair of sneakers in the car to be great incentives to get out and get moving.

The metro Atlanta area offers a plethora of beautiful outdoor spaces, and Cox, 48, can often be seen climbing Stone Mountain, kayaking on the Chattahoochee River, mountain biking at Blankets Creek, and cycling through the Eastside of Atlanta and Decatur.

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Cox’s kids have also been a huge source of motivation. “I’m really trying to get my kids active,” he says. “They don’t need to be endurance athletes or anything, but it’s important for them to challenge themselves and have some appreciation of the outdoors.”

Ideally, Cox will get in his exercise at the beginning of the day by cycling 12 hilly miles to work and then get in a workout at his office gym. Sometimes, instead of hitting the gym in the morning, he’ll spend time kayaking after work. Both options leave his evenings open for time with family.

He notes the importance of flexibility when it comes to making activity a priority. “I’m always the first one to wake up on the weekends—leaving to go paddle, bike or run before the rest of the family wakes up,” he says.

“Anybody with kids knows that the best made plans can change at any time.

So, you just have to be super flexible with your personal exercise or activity time and use your time wisely.” ●

Photography by (left) Brian Reeves; Perfect Day Photos. Photo courtesy of (middle) Paul Cox, photography by Patty Geisinger.