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## Pop star boot camp



By Stephen Dowling  
BBC News Magazine

Pop stars are lithe, snake-hipped, bundles of energy, right? Not if they've been off the road for decades. But how can you get them back in shape?

Many bands, with members who are not exactly of tender years, have reformed in recent times.

The Police have sold out megadomes, Take That have enjoyed chart success, and The Specials are back. Spandau Ballet are one of the latest to join the train of returning 40 and 50-something bands and will tour in October.

Pictures of singer Tony Hadley jogging recently prompted some unkind comments in some of the media. And there's the problem for reformed bands. While in the memory of the fans, the band are still svelte, in reality many of them have become, like a good Bordeaux, a bit more full-bodied.

So how do they get back in shape?

### Leather trousers

For singers like Bono, Mick Jagger and Bruce Springsteen, the rigours of touring are less of a surprise - no sooner are they off one tour than they are making plans for the next. But if your touring has been a touch more sporadic, then your audience might well balk at the sight of your elasticated waists. There's no option other than knuckle down to diet and exercise.

Matt Roberts, who runs fitness studios in London, is the man many musicians have turned to when the leather trousers no longer fit comfortably. He's helped Sting and his wife Trudie Styler with nutrition and fitness, helped former Spice Girl Mel C get her fitness back after the groups' massive success, and also given Madonna tips to keep in shape.

Mr Roberts says musicians "are like all people, they go through peaks and troughs".

"Often, they have been in great shape, and they want to get back into that shape."

“ One of the key things that helps them is knowing they have a goal ”

Matt Roberts  
Personal trainer



Madonna's fitness regime is famously gruelling

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### Doughnut for elevenses

"One of the key things that helps them is knowing they have a goal. It makes it easier. Tony Hadley is a great example. There's pressure for him to get back into the shape he was when he was younger.

So if the likes of Hadley decides the regime's too tough and a doughnut for elevenses is a more attractive proposition, he will only have himself to blame if he's feeling uncomfortable on stage once the tour starts.

For someone like a musician the pressure of performing is a really enormous high and the low is a deep low. Their emotional levels change enormously.

“ It is basically singing that got me into cycling and that got me into personal training ”

Mike Edwards  
Jesus Jones/Personal trainer

"The lows can be a trigger for eating and drinking a lot."

Mr Roberts' advice to Hadley is stick to the regime he has been given - precisely because he had a good level of fitness when he was in his 20s. It also means dieting and making sure your meals have the right balance.

"Someone who looked great when they were 25 and is now 45, well at 45 you can still change the body and get yourself back to the shape you were when you were younger, if not completely, then pretty close."

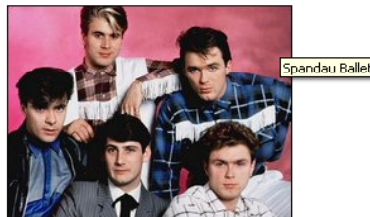
When most of us are faced with a bulging waist or a bottom that's seen tighter days, not many of us have footage of a slimmer, lither, sexier self obtainable with only a few clicks on YouTube. Pop stars are having to compete with their own ageing frames, but a public perception of what they should look like.

### Specificity fundamentals

Someone who knows both sides of this particular coin is Mike Edwards, a Bath-based personal trainer who also happens to be the lead singer of occasionally-still-active band Jesus Jones.

Edwards, whose band toured the world in the early 90s on the back of hit albums like Doubt, says someone like Hadley needs to train realistically.

"There are lots of things to take into account, but one of the fundamentals is specificity. Your training should try and match the demands of what you're training for.



"There's no point in saying 'I'm a cyclist, I'm going to learn rugby', and expecting to go out and play rugby straight away."

Once they were lithe, now they are slightly more full-bodied

The photos of Hadley out

pounding the paths jogging get a thumbs up from Edwards - running is excellent cardio-vascular exercise and gets the lungs and heart working efficiently, which is always good news for a singer.

"I didn't know all this when I was in band. I was just aware of my voice as a singer. It is basically singing that got me into cycling and that got me into personal training.

"He hasn't left it too late, not by a long way.

"Think of all the poor souls who run the London Marathon. Most of these people have to fit in hours and hours of training working and having families."

### Strenuous routines

As for touring - especially thanks to the fact Spandau Ballet are likely to be staying in plush hotels - Hadley should be able to keep himself trim.

Edwards is more worried about a pop star of yesteryear also back on the circuit - Michael Jackson, who is doing a run of 50 concerts from July.

He says the strenuous routine Jackson intends to perform after so long off the live circuit could cause all sorts of problems night in, night out - especially as Jackson has been studying his old videos and apparently promising to perform his old routines.

"It depends what he's been doing in the time he hasn't been touring - if he's been living a sedentary lifestyle, then he's in trouble. You can't compete with what your 30 or 20-year-old you used to do.

"Not night after night after night. OK, you might be able to get away with it one night, but what about the seventh or 15th night?"