

Tough Mudder Is Changing in 2015—Here's What To Expect

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Obstacle course racing has absolutely exploded over the last few year. One race specifically, Tough Mudder, has had more than 1.5 million participants to date, and are expecting 600,000 in 2015 alone. And to keep veterans and first-timers excited, they've just announced a big update to the race series.

Every (yes, every!) obstacle along the 10- to 12-mile course will be refreshed or changed entirely, and the team spent hours in the Obstacle Innovation Lab to dream up these new adrenaline-packed challenges. The course needed an update explains head obstacle designer for Tough Mudder, Nolan Kombol. Here's what you can expect:

Why change the course at all?

It's something that was driven internally, explains Kombol. While every year in the past about three to four obstacles are altered for a fresh look, 2015 marks a change to the entire menu. "We thought, how can we change the challenge? How can we better ourselves?" he says. "But we also had to keep in mind what people expect to see at Tough Mudder."

What are some of the new obstacles?

For those who have never run a Tough Mudder, every obstacle will be a fresh challenge! But for those seasoned in these obstacle courses, here are some of the surprises:

King of Swingers (new): Leap off the ledge, reaching for a swinging rope. If you miss, you'll fall into a pit of muddy water. If you make it—then you have to use your momentum to swing toward (and hit) a hanging bell.

Hold Your Wood 2.0 (update): You and your team will have to carry a 150- or 250-pound log around a quarter-mile circuit. Lift it over and under obstacles—but if it hits anything, you have to start over.

The Hangover (new): Climb the angled 10-foot wall that leaves you dangling at the end—you'll need the help of your team to get down.

Cry Baby (new): Two words: Tear gas. Crawl through an enclosed cylindrical-structure maze that's filled with a safe, tear gas-like substance.

Funky Monkey 2.0 (update): While this monkey bar traverse might not look *too* different, the feel of the obstacle is. Start with your typical monkey bars, then reach for a trapeze bar and swing to the second half of the obstacle: a hand-over-hand climb down the descending pipe.

For the full list of new obstacles announced today visit, toughmudder.com/obstacles.

These obstacles definitely emphasize teamwork.

Tough Mudder has always been a social experience. “It’s unlike other mud runs and triathlons,” Kombol says. “When you get to the obstacles, even if you’re alone and not on a team, you stop and you assess the obstacle, talk and form bonds about what you are going to do and how you’re going to do it.” The social aspect is one of participant’s favorites so the obstacle design team worked to optimize it.

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