

A free guide from Thomas Mumford

Pick your hard thing.

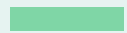
How I choose one thing a year that I'm not sure I can do, and how you can choose yours.

Why one hard thing

In 2025 I did 75 Hard. In 2026 I signed up for a full-distance triathlon in Barcelona with no triathlon background. I trained almost every day from April. On October 3, the day before the race, a storm cancelled it.

On October 4 I went out in Calella and ran 26.27 miles anyway.

That run is the whole idea. A hard thing is not a medal. It's a year organized around becoming someone who can try. The race can be cancelled. Who you became training for it can't.



The idea comes from **misogi**: one challenge a year, hard enough that you might not finish. And from Richard Branson, who wrote: “nothing good in my life has ever happened from the safety of my comfort zone.”

Step 1. Pick the kind of hard

Six categories cover almost everything. Circle the one that makes you a little nervous.

Endurance	A marathon, a triathlon, a long open-water swim
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Strength	A lift target, your first pull-up, a physique goal
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Adventure	A summit, a multi-day trek, a crossing
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Discipline	A 75-day challenge, a daily streak with real rules
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New skill	Learn to swim, surf, speak a language, play an instrument
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Build	Launch a business, finish a book, ship a project
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The test

If you're sure you can do it, it's a goal, not a hard thing. If it could seriously hurt you, it's reckless. You want the space in between.

Step 2. Pick the level

First step

Hard for you, very likely doable. Right if you've never done a hard thing on purpose.

Stretch

About a 70% chance you pull it off. Enough to change your year.

Misogi

Maybe a 50/50. Barcelona was this for me: a full-distance triathlon with no triathlon background.

Write yours

My hard thing is:

By this date:

Step 3. Six months, six jobs

Month 1 **Commit.** Put a date on it and tell people. Record your starting point.

Month 2 **Build the base.** Easy and frequent beats hard and rare.

Month 3 **Fix the weak link.** Spend extra time on the part that scares you.

Month 4 **Go long.** Rehearse the real thing in pieces.

Month 5 **Simulate it.** A dress rehearsal. Nothing new on the day.

Month 6 **Do it.** And if the day falls apart, find another way to do the hard thing.

Want this tailored to your category, level and schedule? The free tool at **thomasgmumford.com/start** builds it in two minutes.

Step 4. Make room for it

Everyone has the same excuse, and it's a real one: time. I run a company with crews in 21 markets. The book that helped me most was **Buy Back Your Time** by Dan Martell: find the work you can hand off, and spend the hours on what only you can do.

Three rules that kept me going

Calendar it. Sessions go in the calendar like meetings.

Lower the bar, not the streak. On a bad day do ten minutes. It still counts.

Do it in public. Telling people is what makes you show up on the days you don't want to.

Now pick it.

Write it down, put a date on it, and tell one person today.

Then tell me: tag me or email **hello@thomasgmumford.com**. I'm announcing my 2027 hard thing soon. Follow along at thomasgmumford.com.



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