

AMERICAN NINJA WARRIOR

Artis
Thompson

Inspiring athlete and amputee, Artis Thompson III, is a winning example of dedication on NBC's *American Ninja Warrior*

Written by Tassie Hewitt

Artis Thompson III, whose goal is to be the next *American Ninja Warrior*, stretched his physical and mental strength to the limit and inspired amputees and others all over the world. He competed on the NBC reality TV show and says he will be going back for more. This powerful Katyite demonstrated that no obstacle is too great.

Thompson, who is also a personal trainer at 24 Hour Fitness in Katy, accepts no excuses from his clients, or himself. He boxes and plays semi-professional football with the Fort Bend Storm. Like many athletes, he spends hours in training, sprinting, doing calisthenics, and working on his upper body strength, all with a prosthetic leg.

A Devastating Loss

He lost the lower part of his left leg in a motorcycle accident in 2012, just three years after his brother died in a motorcycle accident. "I lost my leg, but I didn't lose my life," says Thompson, who refuses to allow his physical challenge to slow him down. "You have to keep on going, push through, and live life."

Determined to Succeed

Thompson said his biggest challenge was not losing his leg, but blocking out negativity from others. He was motivated by his aunt and some of his clients to audition for the show. "When I first started, there were a lot of people who said I couldn't do it or that I shouldn't do it. But it's all about me, how committed I am, and how hard I want to work," says Thompson.

American Ninja Warrior is a sports entertainment competition that

challenges contestants with grueling obstacle courses designed to test their strength, balance, and endurance. Contenders compete in log runs, wall climbs, and spider crawls. They leap from platform to platform, swing from great heights, and propel their bodies over barricades. In the history of the show only a few have successfully completed the course.

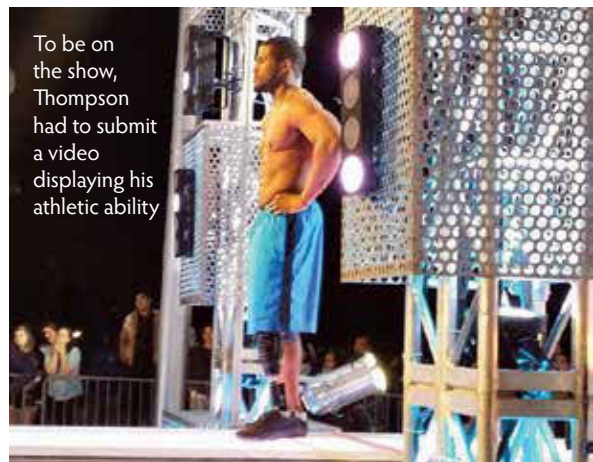
One in a Million

Participants are required to submit a video displaying their athletic ability and desire to win. "Having one leg is a great story, but I had to show them in my audition tape that I could still climb the treacherous Warped Wall. I had to demonstrate that I'm able

Thompson has competed on two seasons of *American Ninja Warrior*



To be on the show, Thompson had to submit a video displaying his athletic ability



★ WINNING KATY PICKS ★

Favorite Restaurant
Chuckwagon BBQ & Burgers

Favorite Dessert Place
Ooh La La Dessert Boutique

Best Place to Workout
24 Hour Fitness

Family Fun Choice
Times Square Entertainment

to do everything in the show,” says Thompson. In season seven, Thompson succeeded in making it to the third obstacle. One year later, in season eight, he made it as far as the fourth obstacle when he fell into the water during a log run. “They were amazed and said no other amputee who’s gone on the show has been a true athlete. I was the first amputee they really thought had a chance to win.”

Playing to Win

Thompson’s goal was to make it to the finals, and despite his motivating achievement, he is disappointed in his performance. “I went on the show to win. Anything short of this success in my eyes is a failure,” says Thompson. “My plans for the future are to keep training, go back into it stronger, and never give up until I complete it.”

In the eyes of his fans, however; he is nothing less than a winner. “People from all over the world have reached out to me to say they’re inspired by what I’ve done,” says Thompson. “I’ve had amputees tell me they’re motivated to start working out. They’re motivated to do something with their lives.”

In the spirit of a true warrior, Thompson plans to keep hurdling over every obstacle that comes his way. “You never know what’s going to happen next, so make the most of every day. My advice to others is to live life for yourself, reach forward to your goals, and never give up.” KM

TASSIE HEWITT is a freelance writer and weekend warrior who has no more excuses for not going to the gym.



Photo by Anetris Wallace

Artis Thompson III, who lost his leg in a motorcycle accident, is inspiring other amputees to push themselves