

Why Ronnie's Story Will Leave You Speechless

Suggested Title:

Ronnie Coleman's Unbelievable Strength – The Legend and the Price

Suggested Thumbnails:

A split image of Ronnie Coleman lifting 800 lbs with the Mr. Olympia trophy on one side and him post-surgery in a wheelchair on the other. Bold text: "Strength Beyond Limits"

A close-up of Ronnie squatting heavy weights with the phrase, "Is this worth it?"

A before-and-after image with Ronnie's early competition physique contrasted against his injured, post-surgery look.

VIDEO INTRO

<https://youtu.be/1vWSs0sRbvK?si=01cLYgMxAwOwjQ8n&t=152> (2:32-2:40)

"The new Mr. Olympia Ronnie Coleman"

<https://youtu.be/8cBvtrVAmbI?si=y9DPe-mFyu812wID&t=60> (1:00-1:04)

"He works out two to two and a half hours a day six days a week perfecting his body"

<https://youtu.be/gSMaI63H9hc?si=aK4XpiViXTkjtQay&t=223> (3:43-3:50)

https://youtu.be/hlcVW_YsVyM?si=o0KrCdp8FA5DvcIT&t=41 (0:41-0:50)

<https://youtu.be/9vWgSTdkc2A?si=0c4cxe8oqck4X-Xi&t=98> (1:38-1:42) -> Ronnie Coleman - 2,300 lb leg press

<https://youtu.be/gSMaI63H9hc?si=1VEfAMLHeJ2d7FLu&t=103> (1:42-1:51) -> RONNIE COLEMAN 200lb Dumbbell Press

<https://youtu.be/gSMaI63H9hc?si=2Ykd9qjVNvfhuAk6&t=16> (0:16-0:21)

<https://youtu.be/HIMoZn4xkAw?si=qDjbMp62MtSL6tUk&t=469> Flashy cuts from (7:49-8:07)

<https://youtu.be/1vWSs0sRbvK?si=zHPNdW5-yChwwFQQ&t=217> (3:37-3:43)

"We did it, baby we did it, we did it"

https://youtu.be/1vWSs0sRbvK?si=6x9nppKo_XSMEAJK&t=47 (0:47-1:02)

“One of these men goes home with a second place \$50,000 check the other man goes home with the 10th Mr. Olympia contest title and \$110,000 check in second place” -> Fast forward

<https://youtu.be/1vWSs0sRbvk?si=GqELCoJnUEgeJ1tZ&t=70> (1:10-1:17) The moment he faints

INTRODUCTION

HOOK/WHAT/WHY

In 1998, Ronnie Coleman fainted after winning his first Mr. Olympia title—a moment of pure triumph. But little did the world know, this victory marked the beginning of a legendary run that would come at an unimaginable cost. Ronnie, an eight-time Mr. Olympia, pushed his body to the absolute limit, turning his story from one of unstoppable greatness to a heartbreaking tale of sacrifice. He had just beaten out legends like Flex Wheeler, Nasser El Sonbaty, Kevin Levrone, and Shawn Ray, who were all expected to take the top spot. It was the start of a career that would make him one of the most dominant bodybuilders ever. Ronnie's strength, size, and pure drive put him on a whole other level, making him almost unbeatable. But while he kept stacking up wins, the strain of pushing his body to the limit started catching up with him. By the time he retired, all those years of intense training had taken a serious toll, leaving him physically crippled. This is the story of Ronnie "The King" Coleman, the greatest bodybuilder ever to grace the stage, and the painful cost of being untouchable at the top.

BODY PARAGRAPHS

HIS EARLY LIFE

Ronnie Dean Coleman was born on May 13, 1964, in Monroe, Louisiana. Even by the time he was just 16, his incredible genetics were already obvious.

https://youtu.be/8cBvtrVAmbI?si=J_dpoCIKmv2hNya&t=49 (0:49-0:59)

“Coleman began lifting weights at age 13 continuing through high school and his days as middle linebacker for Eddie Robinson's Grambling teams”

Ronnie started lifting weights at 13, and continued through high school, where he played middle linebacker for Eddie Robinson's Grambling football teams. Although he graduated from college with a degree in accounting, he couldn't find success in the field and ended up working as a pizza delivery driver. He was so broke at the time that he survived on free pizza from his job every day.

https://youtu.be/Y_ZNOa8K1tY?si=IFwRJLxhMwCGKXg5&t=70 (1:10-1:17)

“Two jobs I had after college uh my first job was, I was a pizza delivery guy”

By 1989, desperate for better income and a stable career, Ronnie became a police officer.

<https://youtu.be/Y5cKVcrwRXo?si=Fli-qVQNUGcew4-j> (0:00-0:05)

“Sometimes it can be pretty hectic and uh sometimes it can be real easy”

By then, he was already a massive figure, but his life would take a major turn after a chance encounter with a friend on the force. This friend introduced him to Metroflex Gym, owned by amateur bodybuilder Brian Dobson. Brian saw Ronnie's potential and offered him a free gym membership if he let Brian train him for the [1990 Texas bodybuilding competition](#). And as they say, the rest is history.

After Ronnie won his first official bodybuilding show, he started entering more competitions, eventually earning his pro card that same year. At just 26, Ronnie knew he had a bright future ahead.

<https://youtu.be/8cBvtrVAmbl?si=2ZsYw9N4aS7lqmyl&t=41> (0:41-0:49)

“I just got a a burning desire to to be successful in life I've always had it I was pretty much born with it”

His hard work was evident to everyone, but what's even more impressive is that during this time, he was still working full-time as a police officer, a job he kept from 1989 all the way until 2003. Ronnie loved it, saying, "[I enjoyed it a lot. There was never a day I didn't look forward to going to work.](#)"

As his reputation grew, so did his accomplishments, winning regional bodybuilding competitions and even competing in powerlifting shows.

Despite his success in local shows and a job he genuinely enjoyed, Ronnie knew he wanted more. He had his eyes set on the biggest prize in bodybuilding: the Mr. Olympia title. Winning a Mr. Olympia trophy means you're at the top of your game, the peak of your bodybuilding career. Past legends like Arnold Schwarzenegger and Lee Haney had won it, and many dream of just competing, let alone winning. But to win the title eight times in a row? That was almost unthinkable... until Ronnie came into the picture.

THE STRUGGLE PHASE

However, success didn't come easy.

In his first Mr. Olympia competition in 1992, Ronnie didn't even rank. He tried again in 1994, placing 15th. Over the next three years, he placed 10th, 6th, and 9th. Though he was frustrated, giving up was never an option for Ronnie. He knew his time would come.

1998

In 1998, after Dorian Yates had just claimed his seventh Mr. Olympia title, Ronnie Coleman entered the competition as an underdog, trailing behind four other competitors. Ronnie finished Ninth Place at the previous Olympia and wasn't considered much of a threat by that time he was at best an afterthought. He wasn't the favorite to win, but Ronnie had significantly improved since the previous year, showing his insane work ethic and dedication to his craft. He had the looks and power to dominate the entire scene. As the competition progressed, it became clear that this wasn't the same Ronnie Coleman people had seen. His physique had transformed, and he was ready to make history.

The final showdown in the 1998 Mr. Olympia came down to Ronnie and Flex Wheeler.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hlcVW_YsVvM (00:00-0:20)

Flex was one of the top contenders at the time, and the competition was fierce. For one of these men, second place meant a \$50,000 check and the recognition of being one of the best in the world. But for the other, it meant the coveted Mr. Olympia title, along with a \$110,000 prize. When the results were announced, Flex Wheeler took second place, and Ronnie Coleman became the new Mr. Olympia champion.

Everyone thought 1998 was Flex's year. It was supposed to be his big moment at Madison Square Garden, but then Ronnie came in and snatched the win.

<https://youtu.be/qr5VZC54IEM?si=gvpI8TW4o-eJbHck> (0:00-0:08)

"In 1998 when I went to the Olympia Flex was the successor yeah everybody say Flex was going to win"

THE UNSTOPPABLE REIGN

Flex was also a beast then, but Ronnie had something to prove. He won and this victory was life changing for Ronnie. After years of frustration, disappointments, and such hard work, he had finally reached the pinnacle of bodybuilding. But Ronnie wasn't done. Winning one title wasn't enough he wanted more. Over the next several years, Ronnie went on an unstoppable run, winning seven more Mr. Olympia titles in a row.

So, after that, Ronnie went on this crazy winning spree, taking home titles left and right.

By 2001, he was the reigning champ, having won the Arnold Classic, which was a huge deal since no Mr. Olympia had ever pulled that off before. But... things were about to get real complicated.

Fast-forward to the [2001 Olympia](#), and there was a fierce new contender: Jay Cutler. At just 254 pounds, he pushed Ronnie to his limits and left everyone shook. Surprisingly, Ronnie found himself trailing by six points going into the evening show, which is basically unheard of for a defending champion. He showed up not feeling his best, bloated and dehydrated, while Jay looked lean and mean.

But then, the second night came around, and Ronnie was completely transformed. He ditched the bloat, showed off that insane muscle density, and snagged the win, even though it was a nail-biter. Many fans still argue that Jay deserved that runner-up spot after how they both performed.

[In 2002](#), Ronnie was again up against some tough competition, including the crowd-favorite Gunter Schlerkamp, aka The Gentle Giant. Gunter had always been a bit overlooked, but this time he brought his A-game, showcasing some serious thickness and depth that wowed everyone. Ronnie ended up winning, but Gunter stole the spotlight that night.

Then, after the GNC Show of Strength, where Gunter pulled off a shocking upset against Ronnie, it was clear something needed to change. Ronnie hit the gym harder than ever,

adopting a new mindset. He was all about pushing limits like hitting 500-pound bench presses and 800-pound deadlifts for fun.

In the [2003 Olympia](#), he came in at a massive 287 pounds, looking better than ever and basically rewriting the bodybuilding rulebook. After that, he was riding high with seven consecutive Olympia titles under his belt, and his confidence was off the charts.

<https://youtu.be/7HDezzJ6r8I?si=NalsU7Rx13l4CUiM&t=41> (0:41-0:50)

"The oldest athlete in the show looking for eight consecutive titles he's got 25 professional wins to his credit"

But in [2005](#), things got spicy again with Gustavo Badell, a rising star who showed up ready to battle. In the challenge round, he actually beat Ronnie, which was shocking for the bodybuilding world but he was able to do so because he came to the show with a physique that many observers thought could beat out both Jay and Ronnie in the finals. But he got 3rd place. And then... it was a battle between Ronnie and Jay but Ronnie made history again with his eighth Mr. Olympia title.

Every victory added to his legend, but new talent was on the rise, ready to challenge him and shake things up.

Now, let's fast forward to the **2006 Olympia** when the stakes were higher than ever. Jay Cutler, who had been inspired by Ronnie's journey, was now hungry for that top spot. This rivalry between Ronnie and Jay was heating up, and nobody knew what would come next.

Jay Cutler and Ronnie Coleman were all about that grind. They didn't just jump in and start racking up wins, they paid their dues, hustled hard, and climbed the ranks. But tonight, one of them is about to take the crown. For ages, Jay was stuck in second place. People thought that was his peak, especially with Ronnie Coleman in the mix. Jay was the underdog, and everyone was used to seeing him as the runner-up. It was like a permanent spot for him.

But little did they know, Jay Cutler's 2006 was about to be a major comeback moment.

<https://youtu.be/d-OhNTUfaJI?si=nFweY9DZ7QTMq0YI&t=77> (1:17-1:28)

As Ronnie came on stage, it was clear he wasn't quite at his best. Meanwhile, Jay was looking incredible, detailed, dry, and ready to snatch that title. And that's what he did., the reigning champ got taken down by his fiercest rival. This was huge, as it hadn't happened since Lee Haney beat Samir Bannout in '84.

<https://youtu.be/d-OhNTUfaJI?si=kPL3L6J6x5tECJnx&t=88> (1:28-2:18)

"I will now announce the winner of the 2006 mr olympia the next name you hear will be the winner of the 2006 mr olympia you can bring the olympia gold medal the sandow statue and a check for 155 thousand dollars to the 2006 mr olympia [Applause] jay cutler"

Then came the **2007 Mr. Olympia**, where he secured fourth place.

<https://youtu.be/V1HliDmN3ks?si=rYtFV0HGK-rKyesO&t=31> (0:31-0:49)

"He's a legend eight time Mr Olympia the big nasty Ronnie colan get up this is the last time you're going to see him on an Olympia stage his 14th appearance Ronnie [Music] [Applause] Coleman"

Ronnie decided 2007 would be his last ride, he stepped back on that big stage one last time. Everybody saw the eight-time Mr. Olympia, Ronnie the King Coleman on stage.

https://youtu.be/V1HliDmN3ks?si=yCnYqXO_uXmvezGV&t=101 (1:41-3:47)

"Ronnie you're a living legend an eight-time Mr Olympia the most decorated bodybuilder in bodybuilding history and the fans simply love you [Applause] well like always uh I have to get up to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ all glory goes to God and of course y'all are the greatest fans ever I'd like to thank all the people that came from all over the world got a lot of emails saying people coming from everywhere I didn't believe it y'all showed up this is this is the best contest of my life regardless of my placing I'm one of the happiest man in the world and all get up Ronnie Coleman now it's all it's all [Applause] well all I can say is it don't get it get it doesn't get any better than this thank each and everyone for for coming out thank each and every fan out there supporting bodybuilding and supporting me I love y'all all y'all made me have the best life that I goty could ever have and I could have never done it without y'all yeah buddy so uh thank y'all for coming out" -> **Note or VE: Please just takes cuts out of it.**

Ronnie retired with his insane strength. But no one knew the underlying issues he was dealing with.

THE BRUTAL COST

No one knew that the immense weight he lifted and the extraordinary strength he gained from it came at a brutal cost.

<https://youtu.be/JKZ1Bu-9xPQ?si=dEROeIS268tthEI1&t=3> (0:03-0:11)

"The pain was so bad that not only could I not walk I couldn't even lift my legs"

Ronnie's relentless training regimen eventually took a serious toll on his body. As he continued to squat massive amounts of weight, he began to suffer from multiple herniated discs in his spine, particularly in his neck and lower back.

https://www.reddit.com/r/Damnthatinteresting/comments/10hx5u9/8_x_mr_olympia_ronnie_coleman_today/

At first, Ronnie pushed through the pain, as he had always done. To him, pain was just part of the process, and no amount of discomfort could keep him away from the gym. But as the injuries worsened, they started to change his life in ways he hadn't anticipated.

Despite the growing damage to his body, Ronnie didn't slow down. He continued to compete at the highest level, winning his eighth and final Mr. Olympia title in 2005. By that point, his body had already been through a tremendous amount of wear and tear. Years of heavy lifting and pushing beyond his limits had caused irreversible damage to his spine, and the pain became too much to ignore.

Ronnie Coleman's first major surgery came after he suffered a herniated disc in his back. The injury felt like a gunshot going off in his body, but despite the severe pain.

For those who don't know, a herniated or slipped disc can cause serious issues. According to the NHS, it can lead to numbness in different parts of the body, incontinence, muscle weakness, and even loss of sensation in the legs. If left untreated, it can result in permanent nerve damage or even paralysis.

Ronnie eventually underwent corrective surgery for the injury, which was a huge relief. After the surgery in 2007, Ronnie felt much better and, in typical fashion, went right back to lifting as if nothing had happened.

He went back to squatting and lifting heavy, but this turned out to be one of the biggest mistakes of his career. A year or two later, Ronnie started experiencing back problems again, in the same area. He underwent another surgery for the same issue, but this time, things began to spiral downward.

<https://youtu.be/Q-RnElujInY?si=PzP3os5mtheqFm99&t=1320> (22:00-22:08)

"So, then they cut you open the front and the side the back and then everything's downhill from there yeah, yeah everything went down here"

Once you herniate a disc, your chances of another one popping out increase significantly, and that's exactly what happened to Ronnie. His discs began slipping out on their own. It's like stacking a bunch of cans, and when one falls out, the others start toppling too, that's what was happening to his spine.

Despite these repeated injuries, Ronnie ignored his doctors' advice to stop working out and kept training. Over time, he underwent so many surgeries that most of his spine is now fused together, held in place by cages, screws, and rods.

<https://youtu.be/Q-RnElujInY?si=yNKPacBKuNszUfJi&t=397> (6:37-6:50)

"I couldn't I couldn't walk like no more like 25 feet without my leg being on fire my feet being on fire and then I'm ALOT a whole lot of pain"

Along with the back surgeries, Ronnie also had to undergo two full hip replacements due to the damage. All of the hardware in his back and neck causes constant pressure on his nerves, leading to severe, ongoing pain. The metal supports pinch his nerves, and because of the damage, it's unlikely he'll ever walk unassisted again.

Outro

The bodybuilding world has shown Ronnie an outpouring of support, but despite everything, he says he has no regrets. Ronnie sees himself as a natural-born athlete and competitor. He always knew this might be the price to pay, and he admits that if given the chance, he'd do it all over again. And he says, his only regret was not doing more reps with the 800 lbs. Deadlift.

https://youtu.be/CkpV_BUgmZQ?si=9vwvvtk8WciBtJ4Y0&t=14 (0:14-

"I still regret uh not deadlifting that 800 more than two reps"

<https://youtu.be/Q-RnElujInY?si=3UXFJg8tojEBY2nb&t=188> (3:08-3:15)

"I'm feeling pain and all that kind of stuff. JOE: **but are you in pain all the time.** RONNIE: yeah, but long as I'm doing what I love doing I'm okay"

This mindset is what made Ronnie a beast, his insane drive to train, compete, and win. This man has pushed his body as far as humanly possible. This is why the world will never see another Ronnie Coleman. AGAIN.