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Dean Cain takes flight / ABC's slim and sexy Superman

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Given a chance, Dean Cain, the first Man of Steel with sex appeal, would grab a slice of pizza faster than he would a speeding bullet.

"I'm just dying for food," says Cain, who isn't thrilled with the menu for superhunkdom: steamed chicken, vegetables and rice.

That, coupled with workouts every other day, is the price the ex-Princeton football star must pay to slip without padding into that bright blue body suit and red cape in ABC's *Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman*.

The series (Sundays, 8 p.m. ET/PT) is groping for ratings strength against a big chunk of kryptonite in the form of *Murder, She Wrote* on CBS, but viewer response to Cain, 27, has been adoring.

"It's flattering to be called a hunk if it means someone who is sexually appealing or handsome," says Cain. "Not if it means you're a dumb, hollow-headed pretty face in a nice package."

"Nice" is a word many pin on Cain. "I can't help it," he says. "I am a nice person. But it doesn't mean I'm going to let somebody take advantage of me."

Cain grew up in Malibu, his father film director Christopher Cain (*Young Guns*). He played football and baseball with future *Brat Pack*ers Emilio Estevez, Rob Lowe and Charlie Sheen.

At Princeton he dated Brooke Shields ("We had a serious romance") and set the NCAA Division I-AA record for most interceptions in a season. Surgery three days before his first pro pre-season game ended a career with the Buffalo Bills.

His acting break was playing Shannen Doherty's Paris squeeze in four episodes of *Beverly Hills, 90210*.

The toughest part of playing Superman is doing the flying sequences. He is dangled from wires attached at his hips and must hold his body out straight.

"That's a pain in the butt - literally. But . . . I know how to fly now."

Cain's Superman is different from most. He looks even younger than he is. And there is a trace of Asian in that handsome face. His parents divorced before he was born and his biological father, whom he has never met, contributed some Japanese heredity.

He worries that this detail will hurt the only father he's known. "I have no memory of him not being my father."

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The only other thing to fret about is he's too tired to date. "But if I found the right person, I'd make time. You always do."

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