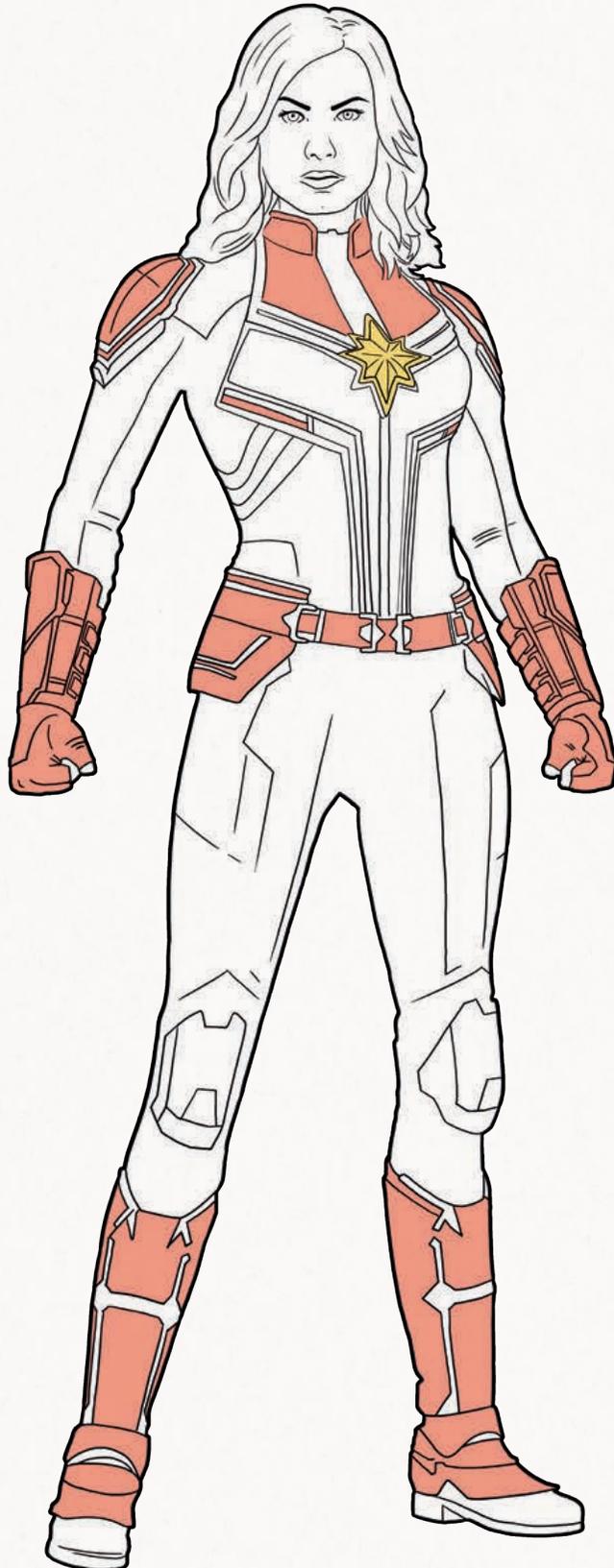


★ HOW TO BE ★

# CAPTAIN MARVEL

\* Follow these simple instructions to turn yourself into a superhero

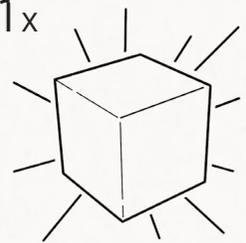


## You will need:

1x



1x



1x



1x



2x



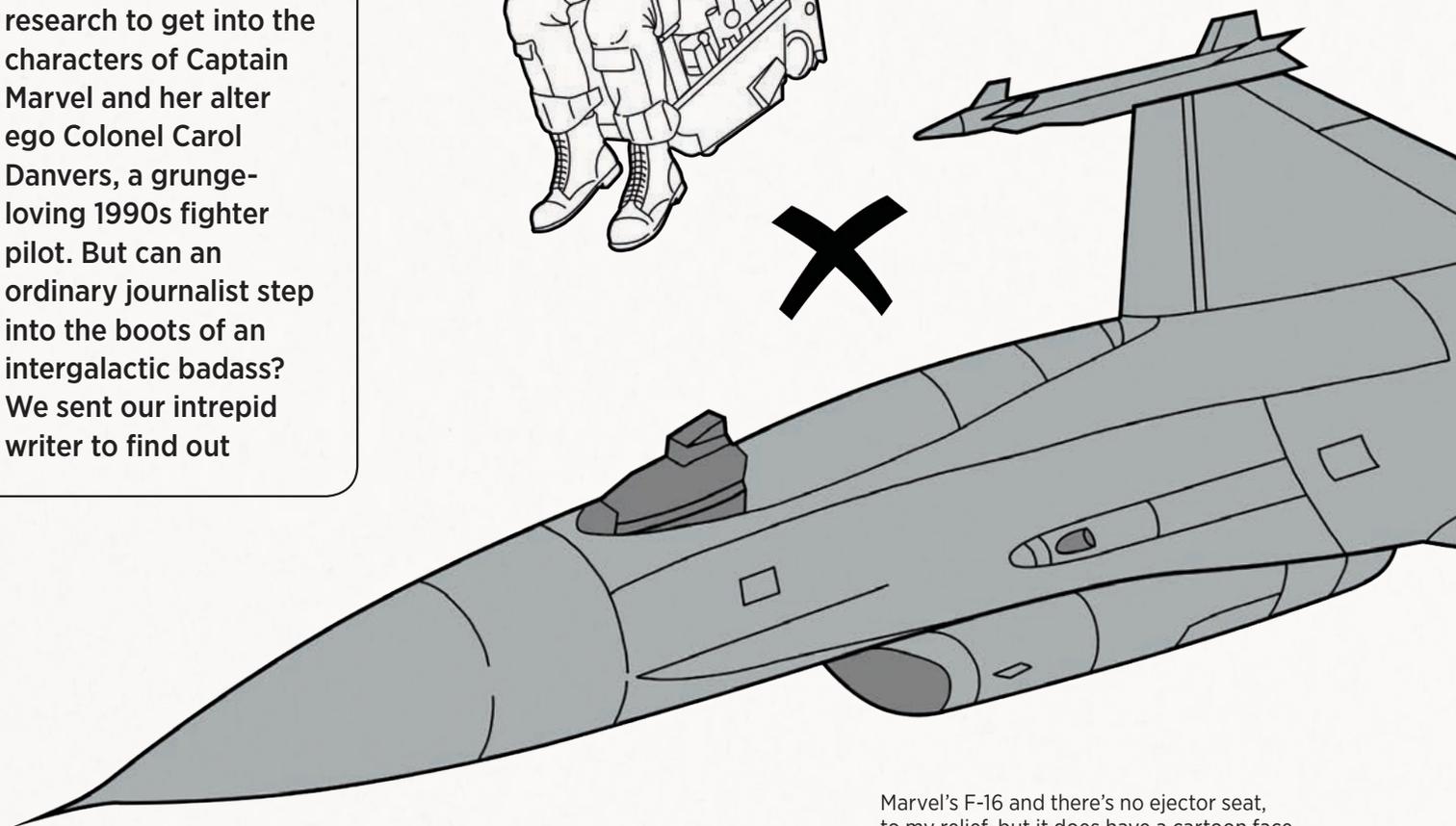
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What does it take to become Air Force-pilot-turned-Avenger Captain Marvel? The short answer is quite a lot. Actor Brie Larson embarked on a tough programme of physical training and extensive research to get into the characters of Captain Marvel and her alter ego Colonel Carol Danvers, a grunge-loving 1990s fighter pilot. But can an ordinary journalist step into the boots of an intergalactic badass? We sent our intrepid writer to find out



**Escape plan**  
The first thing pilots need to know? How to make a safe but stylish exit



## Step one: learn to fly a fighter plane

**Hollywood:** Larson took her role as a fighter pilot seriously. Behind-the-scenes footage shows her at the Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada, where she simulated a dogfight (close-range air combat) in an F-16 jet and learned how to perform manoeuvres including barrel rolls and stall turns.

**Real life:** I'm feeling quite blasé about the prospect of flying a plane – then I do the research I should have done before I agreed to the idea. I watch videos of would-be fighter pilots training to withstand extreme G (gravity) force – most of them go very white and pass out. I read an interview with Larson, where she talks about pulling 6.5Gs

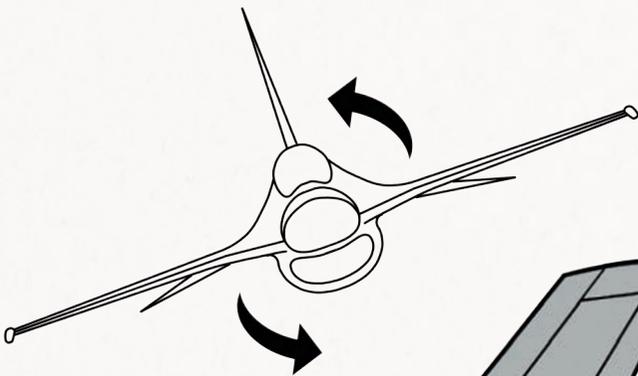
in the F-16. “I puked the whole time,” she says breezily, “Literally the whole time.” I am no longer blasé about flying a plane.

When the day rolls around I eat a very light breakfast before heading to Goodwood Aerodrome in the bucolic West Sussex countryside, which is home to the Ultimate High flight academy. It's owned by Mark “Greeners” Greenfield, a rugged, ex-RAF jet fighter pilot who has kindly offered to accompany me to my untimely demise – I mean, teach me the basic principles of flying. We're going up in a T67 Firefly, a bright yellow, two-seat aerobatic training aircraft with a top speed of 280kmph. It's not as sleek and powerful as Captain

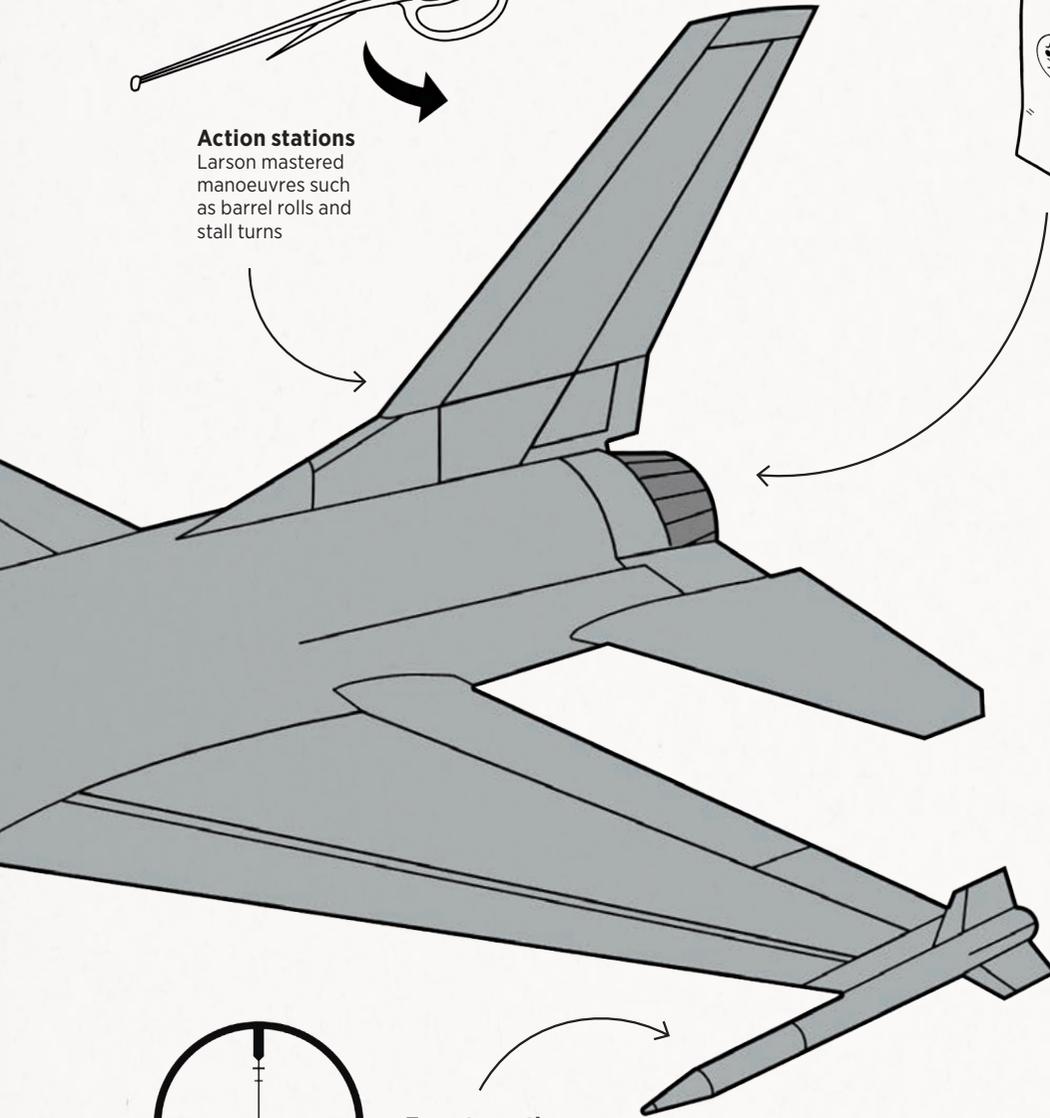
Marvel's F-16 and there's no ejector seat, to my relief, but it does have a cartoon face painted on the front, which gets a thumbs-up from me.

Greeners runs through the experience of positive G-force, in which upwards acceleration pushes you down into your seat at double, triple or, in Larson's case, six times your normal weight. Fighter pilots must be able to handle upwards of 8Gs without blacking out when the blood rushes from their heads to their feet. We then talk about dogfighting. Greeners emphasises the importance of eyeballing your enemy – “You've got to see the bad guy to shoot him down...” – and flying “smoothly but aggressively”. Do I have any questions? It doesn't seem like the right time to enquire about the onboard drinks menu, so I shake my head and he hands me my flight suit.

I climb into the cockpit via the wing, wobbling from the weight of the parachute attached to my back. I'm then strapped into



**Action stations**  
Larson mastered manoeuvres such as barrel rolls and stall turns

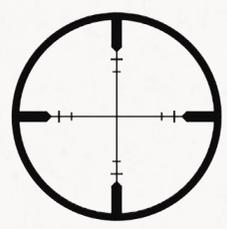


**Gut feeling**  
Pulling 6.5Gs made the actor "puke the whole time. Literally the whole time"

the seat and kitted out with a headset. "Welcome to my office," Greeners grins, flicking various switches as the bubble canopy comes down over our heads. I put my sweaty hands on my thighs and try to channel my inner superhero as the engine starts to roar. As we take off and make our way through the clouds, I decide this isn't too bad. The views are incredible and, after all, I'm in safe hands. I'm ready to face some G-force. Except, as it turns out, I'm not. As Greeners pulls hard on the throttle, my stomach turns into a plummeting cannonball and my head lurches like the morning after a heavy night out. "That was 2.5Gs," he says, gallantly holding back laughter.

We decide to focus on other manoeuvres. He hands over the control for me to perform a barrel roll, in which blue sky becomes cloud then sea and then cloud again. I'm surprisingly happy flying upside down, so Greeners decides I'm ready to experience a stall turn, an aerobatics stunt that involves letting the engine stutter out then spiralling downwards with the nose pointed towards land. Everything becomes eerily quiet and the Sussex landscape rears up in the windscreen. But panic is replaced by exhilaration - I'm hanging from my straps and it feels great. Maybe I do have what it takes to be a fighter pilot?

Back at base, Greeners lets me down gently. If I can't handle more than 2.5Gs, I probably shouldn't give up the day job. Only the best of the best have what it takes to become fighter pilots - or, indeed, ET-wrestling superheroes. Alien invasion? I'll be hiding in the bunker. >

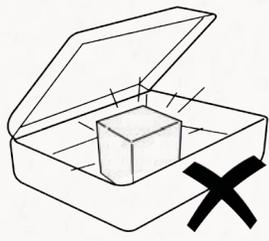


**Target practice**  
A (simulated) F-16 dogfight took Larson as close to real conflict as possible

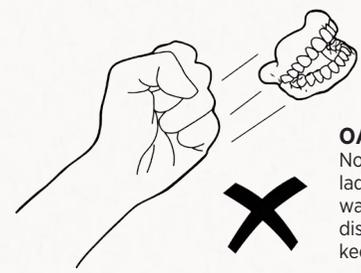
**WARNING!** Three hazards to watch out for during training



**Stray cats**  
Yes, we know they're cute, but they'll have your eyes out if you're not careful.



**Lunchbox**  
What harm can a lunchbox do? Don't wait till breaktime to find out.



**OAPs**  
Not all old ladies are Skrull warriors in disguise, so keep your cool.

## Step two: train like a superhero

**Hollywood:** Captain Marvel is the most powerful character in the Marvel Cinematic Universe so Larson embarked on an intense, nine-month training regime to get herself ready. "Using my body as a tool that can do incredible things was the beginning of unlocking myself and who Captain Marvel is," the actor told the *LA Times*.

After daily 90-minute workouts for the first six months, the schedule ramped up to twice-daily two-hour workouts for the final three. By the time the shoot started, Larson could deadlift 225 pounds, do box jumps

above her waist height, even push a Jeep – really.

**Real life:** Want to push a vehicle uphill with your bare hands? Dream on, says personal trainer Joe Bedford, co-founder of Revolution Holborn. "Pushing the Jeep was used as a novelty training 'reward' to showcase Brie's newfound strength. It was a one-time effort and would have been executed with great care to avoid injury."

He's a fan of the "well thought out and progressive" regime developed by Larson's trainer Jason Walsh, however, which used the principles of

"progressive overload" to build muscle. Progressive overload is a clever training technique in which the demands placed on the body are continually increased to improve muscle size, strength and endurance. It's not for the faint-hearted and Larson herself has said there were points when she wanted to give up. Says Walsh: "Most of the regime is suitable for an average person of any fitness background, but where it might become unrealistic is the final three months, which required 12 hours of training a day. This would be hard for most of us to maintain."

Luckily, Walsh has released a two-week version that's suitable for lesser mortals. Although I'm excited at the prospect of gaining a superhero physique in a fortnight, once again Bedford brings me back down to earth. "Unfortunately there wouldn't be much in the way of tangible physical results after only two weeks," he says. "Rome wasn't built in a day and it would take at least a month to notice a big increase in muscle mass. Commit to the programme for a longer duration and reap the rewards." Verdict? Think I'll stick to pushing a bike.

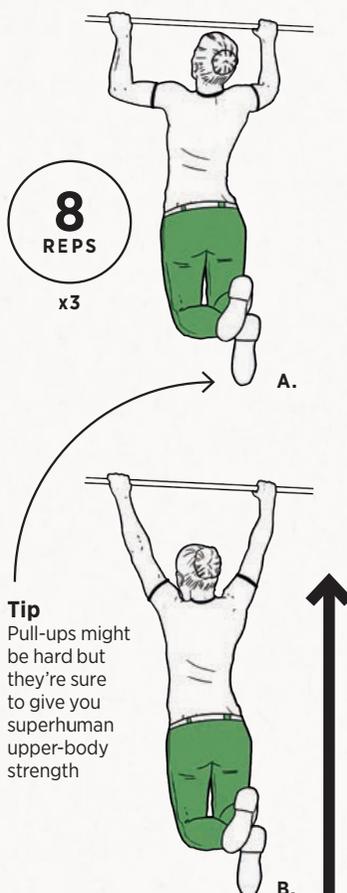
### Workout programme

Want to buff up like Brie or kick ass like the Kree? Follow Jason Walsh's training guide



#### Weighted hip thrust

Pull your heels back in, tuck your chin in and push your weight against the bench (**A**). Push your legs up and squeeze your bum cheeks together (**B**). Count to three on the way up. Do 8-10 reps and repeat three times. Larson managed 400-pound hip thrusts!



#### Pull-up drills

With the help of a partner (or you can stand on a soft box), grab hold of the top of the bar (**A**). Slowly lower yourself with control (**B**). Repeat 8-10 times. Larson couldn't do a single pull-up when she starting training, but by the end of it she was a pro.



#### Bulgarian split squat

Put your left foot on the bench and your right leg in a lunge position (**A**). Lunge forward (**B**). Raise yourself back up and lunge again. Do 8 reps on each leg, and repeat 3 times. Download Jason Walsh's *Captain Marvel* workout on the *Playbook* app

## Civilian outfit

1x



1x



1x



1x



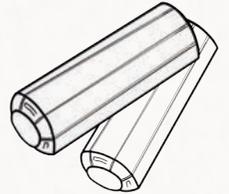
Team band T-shirts with a battered leather jacket for maximum 1990s cachet



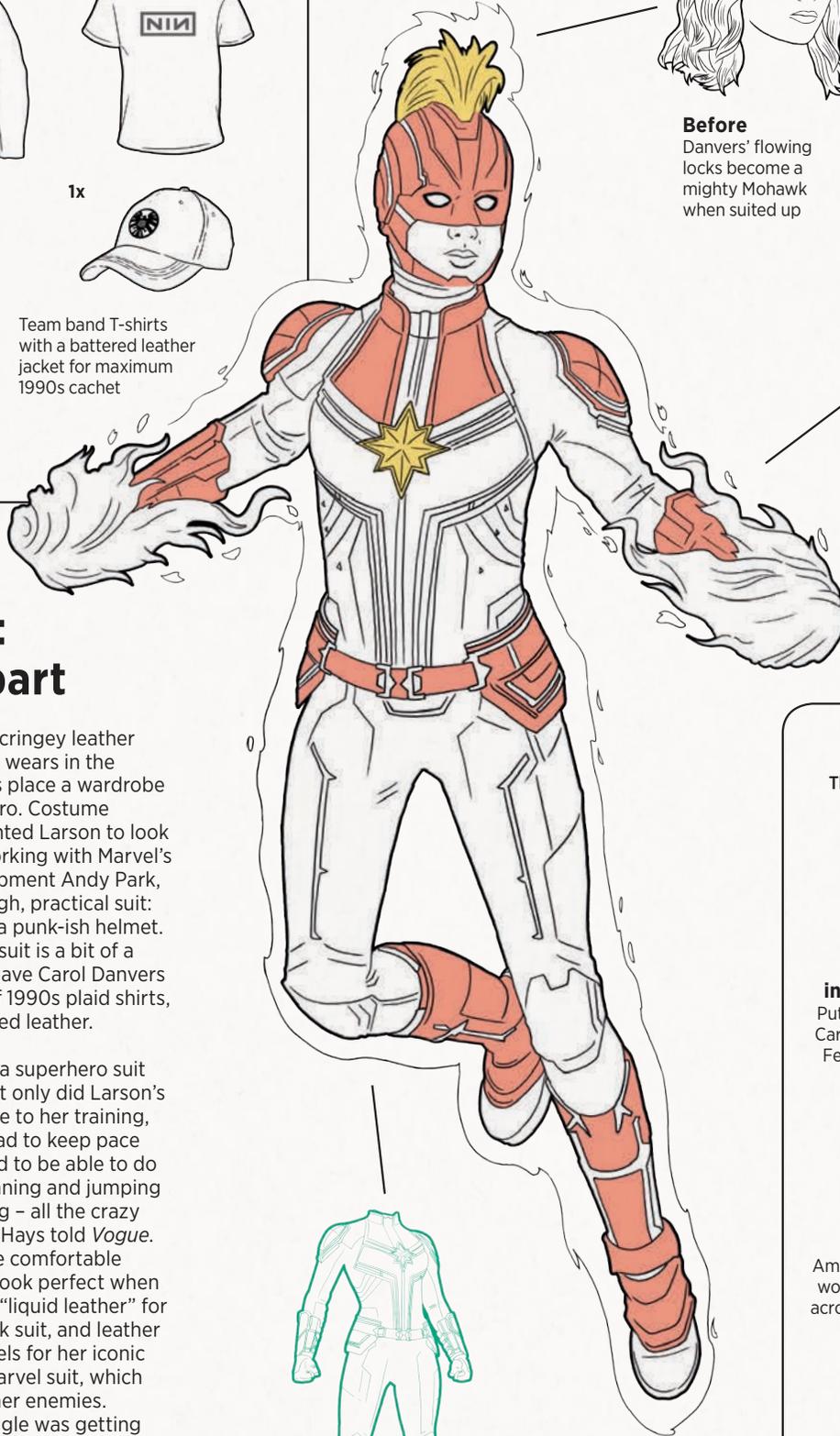
**Before**  
Danvers' flowing locks become a mighty Mohawk when suited up



**After**  
Next, she caused an internet meltdown with this nonsense 'do in Avengers: Endgame



**Dressing down**  
Pair with these power-dampening Skrull cuffs when you want to pass for a civilian



**Stronger suit**  
Switch up your Kree military outfit (left) for this iconic red-and-gold costume

## Step three: dress the part

**Hollywood:** Gone is the cringey leather swimsuit Captain Marvel wears in the original comics and in its place a wardrobe fit for a modern superhero. Costume designer Sanja Hays wanted Larson to look feminine and strong. Working with Marvel's director of visual development Andy Park, they came up with a tough, practical suit: chunky biker boots and a punk-ish helmet. The skintight superhero suit is a bit of a giveaway, so Hays also gave Carol Danvers an on-trend collection of 1990s plaid shirts, band T-shirts and battered leather.

**Real life:** The making of a superhero suit is complicated stuff – not only did Larson's shape keep changing due to her training, but her wardrobe also had to keep pace with the action. "Brie had to be able to do all the action scenes, running and jumping and spinning and fighting – all the crazy stuff you see onscreen," Hays told *Vogue*. "The costumes had to be comfortable enough to move in, but look perfect when standing still." She used "liquid leather" for Larson's green-and-black suit, and leather backed with stretch panels for her iconic red-and-gold Captain Marvel suit, which allowed her to fight off her enemies.

But the biggest struggle was getting undressed. Apparently it took six people to get Larson out of her suit at the end of the day. "That's the life of a superhero!" says Hays. With a few reservations, count us in. ■

## Fly girls

Three more marvellous movie pilots



### Denise Richards in *Starship Troopers*

Putting duty before booty, Carmen became one of the Federation's finest pilots.



### Hilary Swank in *Amelia*

Amelia Earhart was the first woman to fly solo nonstop across the Atlantic. Respect.



### Meg Ryan in *Courage Under Fire*

Nominated for a posthumous Medal of Honor, which may be a small consolation.