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New Zealand Olympic Ambassador

# Richie Patterson

**Olympian number:**  
1072

**Discipline:**  
Weightlifting

**Category:**  
Light Heavyweight

Richie was born in 1983 and grew up on a dairy farm near the village of Pollock on the Manukau Peninsula. He loved farm life as a child and remembers rearing a champion calf for Calf Club Day. He also really enjoyed helping manage and breed fish called Grass Carp in ponds on the farm.

Richie's earliest sports were rugby and cricket, which he started playing for the Waiuku rugby and cricket clubs when he was about nine years old. His parents would drive him the twenty kilometres or so each way for training, fitting it in around evening milking. Richie showed he had natural sporting talent at an early age when he was selected for Counties representative teams in rugby, cricket, and athletics in Year 8 at school.

Secondary school saw a big change in Richie's life as he became a boarder at Auckland Grammar School. He was heavily involved with sport at Auckland Grammar, playing rugby, cricket, squash, athletics, hockey, touch rugby, and at age fourteen, began weightlifting. Richie chose weightlifting to begin with to increase his strength for rugby, where he played halfback, but quickly fell in love with the sport.

Richie says he loved weightlifting because it was purely individual, and he loved seeing the increase in kilos that he could lift as the reward for the effort he had made in training. He says weightlifting allowed him to compete against athletes of the

## Quick facts

**Favourite food:** Roast lamb and kumara

**Favourite movie:** As a child – Footrot Flats “A Dogs Tail”

**Favourite music:** 1980s Power ballads

**Childhood heroes:** Andrew Mehrtens, Jonah Lomu, Chis Harris

**Current favourite athlete:** Usain Bolt

**Most rewarding moment in sport:** Two. Losing the Gold in 2010, and winning the Gold in 2014 both taught me equal lessons in life.

**Talents other than sport:** I make mean nachos

**Worst injury:** Torn ligament in my elbow

**Biggest sacrifice:** Training 7 hours per day meant no energy to give to family or friends

**Job outside sport:** I run my own gym and also deliver courses on Health & Wellbeing, plus being a father and husband



**New Zealand  
Olympic Education**

same body weight and age so it felt like a very even sport. Richie showed his talent from the start and was first selected for New Zealand as an Under 16 weightlifter.

In 2005 Richie went to his first senior World Championships in Doha, Qatar, and then in 2006 he was selected to compete in the Melbourne Commonwealth Games in the Middleweight Under 77 kilo division. Richie finished just out of the medals in fourth, lifting a combined total of 293 kilos.

It was a dream come true for Richie when he was selected for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. He had dreamt of competing at the Olympics since he was a young boy, and to realise that it was about to become true was a life-changing moment for him. In Beijing, Richie says he struggled to overcome his nerves and didn't lift as well as he had been doing in training. He finished twenty-first lifting a total of 300 kilos.

In 2010 at the Delhi Commonwealth Games it was a different story. Richie was now competing in the Light Heavyweight Under 85 kg division and showed his strength and experience by leading until the last few lifts. He ended up winning the Silver medal by finishing second, lifting 331 kilos, just 2 kilos behind the winner from Australia.

Richie was in great form as he approached the 2012 London Olympic Games. Earlier that year he had won the Gold medal at the Oceania and Commonwealth Championships in Samoa. He backed that up as the best performing Commonwealth athlete in his division at the London Olympics when he finished twelfth with an excellent combined lift of 336 kilos. This was a huge increase on Beijing four years earlier.

Two years later Richie would provide a wonderfully exciting finish to the Under 85kg division at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games. Despite a top performance in the snatch, Richie faced disaster when his first two lifts in the clean and jerk were declared no-lifts. After some calming advice from his coach, Adam Storey, Richie prepared to lift 184 kgs which would give him the Gold medal. It was all or nothing for Richie! As he hoisted the bar bell above his head he took a couple of steps backward, but then steadied himself, held his stance, and won the Gold medal.

Richie was exceptionally proud to compete in the 2016 Rio Olympics as he became only the second New Zealand weightlifter to compete at three Olympic Games. In Rio Richie finished sixteenth, lifting a total of 330 kilos. He is looking forward to defending his gold medal at the 2018 Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast, which Richie thinks will be his last major international competition.

Richie's life has revolved around weightlifting for the past fifteen years. He runs his own gym, and coaches up to forty other

weightlifters. In 2014 Richie married fellow New Zealand weightlifter Pip Hale. Richie currently holds all the New Zealand records in three weight categories – 77kgs, 85kgs, and 94kgs. He says one of his strengths are his very powerful legs, which allow him to squat lift up to 270 kilos.

Richie was made a New Zealand Olympic Ambassador at the end of 2016 and is really looking forward to inspiring young Kiwis to be active, and to encourage some to try weightlifting.

## Career highlights

2016	Rio Olympic Games (Sixteenth)
2014	Glasgow Commonwealth Games (Gold)
2012	London Olympic Games (Twelfth)
2010	New Delhi Commonwealth Games (Silver)
2008	Beijing Olympic Games (Twenty-first)
2006	Melbourne Commonwealth Games (Fourth)

## Links

Richie's Website:  
[www.functionalstrength.co.nz](http://www.functionalstrength.co.nz)

Richie's Facebook:  
Richard (Richie) Patterson New Zealand Weightlifter

Richie's Instagram:  
[@pattersonrichie](https://www.instagram.com/pattersonrichie)

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