

DEAR ROSA

BY ROSA-MARIA ROMERO

BORING CARDIO!

Dear Rosa,

I was just wondering if you use the same contest prep for every show. I have been watching you closely for the last four years and your condition is simply spot on for every show. How do you manage that? It's incredible considering the amount of travelling you do. I find it hard even for the local shows...lol. I look forward to your reply.

Katherine,
Newcastle

Hi Katherine

Thank you for your question. Well to be honest contest prep can never be the same from show to show because our bodies change, we get somewhat older, have other commitments, are stressed/mellow, train at different gyms and so on. Due to my work as a long haul flight attendant, I am always training at various facilities all around the world, I am having to deal with constant jet lag and at times I am simply unable to prepare my own food. Therefore I am required to adapt and make changes to my training and dieting as I go along, to ensure I keep on top of things. I started my prep for the 2010 Figure Olympia 6 weeks out. Most women opt for 12 to 15 weeks, but I needed a vacation and wanted to give my body a rest from the constant dieting. I knew I was lean enough to do this and once I did start dieting for the show and increasing the intensity in my training, my body dialled in quite quickly. The best way to keep track of your progress is by taking weekly photographs of yourself and comparing them as you go along. If things are not looking as they should, then increase the tempo and get things cranking so to speak. Your food is ever so important during contest prep. My food is generally the same from show to show, 6 to 10 meals per day, 3 to 4 carbohydrate meals

and lots of green veggies. I hope this gives you a better idea and I wish you luck at your next show.

Good luck,

Rosa

POTASSIUM

Hi Rosa,

I have heard that taking potassium is a good idea, especially during the last week of your contest prep. Do you use potassium?

Kerry,
NSW

Hi Kerrie,

I have used potassium in the past but stopped doing so this season. Potassium (K) is a mineral that performs many functions in the body. Dietary sources of fibre include: tomatoes, citrus fruit, beans, vegetables, milk, bananas and watermelon. Potassium has been shown to lower blood pressure and kidney stones, as well as reducing the risk of stroke. When we deplete for shows, we can at times, put our bodies through incredible stress due to the water manipulation and final week prep as well as the intense training leading up to a show. During my final week deplete, I would consume potassium as a liquid on the hour throughout the day starting from 6am through to



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DEAR ROSA Cont.)

9.00pm. I found that it helped prevent muscle soreness and also cramping. But this season I have changed the foods I consume for my contest prep and my sodium intake is kept quite high, right up until the day before the show. So really it all depends on your diet and how that is affecting your body as to whether you need the potassium or not, but It won't hurt to consume it either way especially during final stages of deplete and contest prep.

Keep fit and good luck,

Rosa

NUTRITION POINTER

Hi Rosa,

I am starting out in competitive fitness and was wondering if you could share

some pointers with me about the nutrition side of things. By that I mean things I should keep in mind. I just need some guidance so that I may head in the right direction.

Dana,
BNE

Hi Dana,
Sure! Let me share some of my personal pointers which will help you get started on your journey.

My diet is about 80% clean in the 'off season' to ensure I stay in shape all year round. My food intake changes consistently depending on my schedule or whether I am competing but generally I will eat anywhere between 30 g and 45 g of protein with every meal such as red meat, chicken, fish, cottage cheese and whey protein. I normally have four starchy carbohydrate meals per day such as basmati rice, brown rice, sweet potato or kumara, whole-meal pasta and tortilla wraps. Being an International Flight Attendant, I am sometimes required to work through the night and the flight may be as long as 14 hours! In these circumstances I will always pack an extra carbohydrate meal or two to ensure I have the energy to perform the work.

Fibrous carbohydrates are consumed with almost every meal and these include broccoli, green beans, spinach leaves, celery and asparagus. If I am ever hungry after a meal, I will add another cup of fibrous carbohydrates ---to satisfy! I simply can't get enough of my greens.

When eating a low calorie diet it is very important to keep up your essential fats. Fats and oils are a concentrated source



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of energy and are necessary for good health and fitness. Without fat, vital organs will lack cushion, nails may become brittle, you could even start to lose your hair, or at the very least sheen and lustre. To avoid this from happening I will often add some avocado, cod liver oil, flaxseeds/flaxseed oil to my diet.

To avoid cravings and sugar intake I will always eat anywhere between two and four hours. My meals are small and spread throughout the day. I may add one or two protein shakes if I am on the run but I try to stay away from protein bars. I believe there is no better fix than a well-balanced and nutritious diet so plan your day ahead, pack all meals then you won't find yourself binging on the unnecessary!

Good luck,

Rosa M&F

Rosa-Maria Romero is Australia's most successful figure competitor and looks forward to answering all your questions! Email your questions now to: rose@fitrose.com.