



ROSA-MARIA ROMERO

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DEAR ROSA

FINDING THE BALANCE

Dear Rosa,
I am 33 years old and overweight. My diet is terrible and since having my first child, I've lost all motivation to train. I find that being a mother restricts me from doing so many things and these days I don't have any time available to enjoy the things I once did. Before having Casey (my little one), I was so fit and

healthy. I trained three to four times a week and was really good with my food. Now I'll just grab whatever I can find in the cupboard. I just don't have the time.

Rosa, I need your help! How do you manage to keep so fit and look amazing all year round, especially with two kids? I believe I need to find a balance or routine that will suit my daily lifestyle, but where do I start? Please help.

Fiona,
WA

Dear Fiona,

So true! Structure is exactly what you need right now and once you have established that, you will be on the right path to achieving your goals. First of all we need to take a close look at your diet and design a nutrition programme that will suit you and your lifestyle.

I recommend eating smaller meals throughout the day. Spread them out about three hours apart. This way you will speed up your metabolism, which will in turn assist with weight loss and help you to maintain a comfortable bodyweight. It is important you consume protein with every meal. I will normally have anywhere between two and four carbohydrate meals a day. My last carbohydrate meal will be around 2.00 pm.

I find I am most hungry in the morning as this is when I train and have clients scheduled so I am pretty much on my feet the entire time. My body needs the fuel in order for it to function efficiently and I rely on my carbohydrates for energy. From about 2.00 pm onwards my body starts to wind down so salads and lean protein will generally be sufficient for the latter part of the day.



CREG WRIGHT

I have just started my off-season. I recently competed in Houston and am now enjoying some down time. By this I mean not restricting myself to certain foods but rather incorporating as many food types as possible and letting my body absorb all the nutrients. I still monitor what I eat but my diet is not as strict. Maybe you could start off by trying something like this. Check it out:

MEAL 1:

40 g (dry weight) oats and 8 egg whites, handful of blueberries or strawberries

MEAL 2:

75 g cottage cheese, 3 brown rice cakes and 10 almonds or cashews

MEAL 3:

150 g chicken breast, 180 g mixed steamed vegetables and 45 g steamed sweet potato

MEAL 4:

Protein shake and one tablespoon of flaxseeds

MEAL 5:

Either fish, chicken, turkey or lean red meat and large mixed salad

MEAL 6:

Casein protein before bed

It's important for you to establish a routine in order to get you back feeling and looking great. I would like to see you eating well and training regularly but you need to take the first step. Start by returning back to the gym for three days a week or getting outdoors with your baby. Most gyms have child-care facilities so there is no reason why you and your baby can't venture out together. I did it with mine.

Try doing 30 minutes on the treadmill. Once you are feeling settled, incorporate lightweights and as time progresses, you will find yourself becoming stronger. This is when you can start increasing your weights, cardio and days. The more consistent you are, the better and faster the results. Your body will love it and so will you. It's just a matter of taking the



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first step. Make it happen, Fiona. It's never too late to get in the best shape of your life.

Love,
Rosa

FIGURE CATEGORY CONFUSION

Dear Rosa,
Congratulations on your recent 8th place at the 2009 Houston Pro Figure. Personally, I thought you should have placed higher. However, I'm a little confused as to how they judge figure shows because there seems to be no consistency with the results. Could you please tell me what the judges are actually looking for when judging this category? I am hoping to enter my first show next year but need some guidelines in order to prepare. I can't wait to hear from you!

Caroline,
Brisbane

Dear Caroline,
The judging criteria vary from federation to federation but generally what the judges look for is a well-balanced and toned physique: not too lean and muscular but rather feminine and fit in appearance. As an NPFC/IFBB judge, I will assess the symmetry of the competitor



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RALPH DE HAAN

first and then the muscularity.

You need to remember that this is not bodybuilding, and figure is judged on the overall package including hair, make-up, body, stage presence, skin tone, bikini and so on. The girls need to look immaculate from head to toe so don't forget all the fine points when you step out on stage. So many competitors focus too much on the body when they should be thinking about the entire package being presented to the judges. Something to keep in mind. If you are competing in the IFBB then may I suggest you visit www.ifbb.com for more information regarding the rules and regulations.

Thank you for following my career and for supporting pro figure. I hope to see more ladies from Australia obtaining pro cards in the near future and representing our country in the USA. I have seen many beautiful women with amazing physiques grace the figure stage here over the years. The key to being successful is to work hard, follow your dreams and make it happen. Good luck with your competition Caroline. Give it all you've got, girl!

Love,
Rosa

VEGETARIAN

Hi Rosa,
I am a vegetarian by choice. I have been told that in order to gain muscle I would need to eat meat. Is this true? I would like to train up for my first figure contest but I'm not sure if I am able to do so because of my strict eating requirements. Hope you can help.

Giselle,
VIC

Hi Giselle,

Great question! I am not sure if you are vegan or not but muscle needs high quality protein in order for it to grow and for you to be able to train hard. By this I am referring to protein that contains all the nine essential amino acids which are found in meats and meat products.

There is however, one alternative to meat and that is soya. You could substitute the meat with eggs and fish but you don't want to have too much fish either or you could find yourself getting sick. Make sure you have these with complex carbohydrates such as vegetables, whole grains and legumes, to name a few. Your body needs fuel in order for it to perform well. If you are a strict vegan (no meat whatsoever) then you will need to rely on protein products such as powders, bars, soya and legumes.

You may find that in this case you consume more simple carbohydrates such as potatoes, rice and bread, in order to satisfy your appetite. These types of carbohydrates do not support lean muscle mass, so do your best to stick with the complex carbohydrates. I must admit it will take you longer to gain lean muscle mass without eating meats. However, it can be achieved. So to answer your question, yes, vegetarians can build lean muscle and be competitive! Go for it! **M&F**

Love,
Rosa

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