



# DEAR ROSA

ROSA-MARIA, AUSTRALIA'S MOST SUCCESSFUL FIGURE COMPETITOR, IS DELIGHTED TO HAVE JOINED THE TEAM AT MUSCLE & FITNESS AND LOOKS FORWARD TO ANSWERING ALL YOUR QUESTIONS! EMAIL YOUR QUESTIONS NOW TO: [ROSE@FITROSE.COM](mailto:ROSE@FITROSE.COM)

## MORE MUSCLE

Dear Rosa,

I'm an amateur figure competitor and I have been competing for the past two years. I struggle gaining mass without putting on excess bodyfat. I find it extremely hard to stay in reasonable shape in the off-season. The judges have told me that I need to gain more muscle in order to be more competitive. I am aware I need to eat in order to grow but how can I do this without putting on too much bodyfat? It's the one thing I really struggle with. I hope you can shed some light.

Mary,  
Victoria

P.S. Keep up the great work Rosa and I think you are awesome!

Hi Mary,

As you know it is impossible to remain in top shape all year round. Not only is it unhealthy and unnatural but our bodies just simply can't handle dieting and training to extreme levels for an extended period, let alone two hours of cardio per day. Contest

shape is the absolute ultimate, right? I am referring to a full six-pack, defined shoulders, etc. Nice but not possible to have all the time. Female bodies are not meant to carry less than 10% bodyfat so it is only natural that after a competition you are going to want to indulge in some yummy foods, sit back and relax for a while. This is when your body will start to change and the extra kilos will slowly become visible. But don't sit back for too long. Training in the off-season is just as important as the on-season, if not more so!

Personally, I try to maintain a comfortable weight in the off-season. I compete on 52 kg and will normally sit around 56 to 57 kg in the off-season. In order to do this I still need to follow a diet in the off-season. However, I consume more carbohydrates and fats and I also increase my protein intake. I make sure I provide my body with the required nutrients in order for it to grow. The judges want to see changes and they want to see you develop. It's like a car without fuel - you won't get very far! Eat more but eat well. Don't go overboard with sauces and stay away from fried foods.

You must also be consistent with your training. Change your programmes regularly, for example every four to six weeks and keep up the cardio. In the off-season I do five cardio sessions a week after my weight training, and every alternate week I'll do one to two track workouts at the local park. You might find me running up and down the stairs at Tamara Beach. Boy that's a great workout!

Treat the off-season as a stepping stone to where you want to be. Eat right, train hard and you will be pleased with the results pre- and post-contest. Remember, your off-season is really your on-season!

Good luck,  
Rosa

## SMALL TRICEPS

Dear Rosa,

I have tiny triceps. How can I make them grow? At last year's ANB contest I was told by one of the judges that I needed to work on my triceps. Please can you help?

Shana,  
Sydney







Hi Shana,

Without a photograph it is a little hard for me to confirm if your triceps are indeed very small. It could also be that you have large biceps and this could be the reason your triceps appear smaller than normal. I personally tend to focus more on my triceps workout as opposed to biceps, as my biceps are already quite big. By that I mean four exercises for triceps performing 12 reps and two exercises for biceps with 15 reps. I will also train these on separate days. Why not try the following routine:

**Triceps x 12 reps**

- Close-grip rope pulldown
- Skullcrusher
- Single-arm cable pulldown
- Dumbbell overhead press

**Biceps x 15**

- Straight bar curl
- Single-arm dumbbell curl

Please concentrate on your form. Make sure that your elbows are close to your body when performing the triceps exercises. Keep your elbows tight and parallel to your body. There is no point going heavy if your form will be jeopardised. Lock the elbows and perform a nice controlled movement. Really isolate those triceps and make them burn. That should make them grow!

Good luck,  
Rosa

## FIRST CONTEST

Dear Rosa,

I've been following your career since 2003 and I am so impressed with everything you have done onstage and off! You are my inspiration and I'm excited to tell you that I have decided to enter my first competition early next year. I am pleased with the gains I have made in just a little over twelve months of weight training and I am looking forward to cutting up and stepping out onstage real soon.

My question to you is, where do I start and how do I prepare for my first show? I would appreciate a little guidance to get me through what I assume will be a roller coaster ride! Thank you in advance Rosa and hope to meet you at one of your shows.

Francesca,  
Perth



GARY PHILLIPS

Great news Francesca!

You must be so excited and I am excited for you too. This is a great question. I wish I had three pages to answer it. Let me try and sum it up for you as best I can so that you have some idea what to expect over the next few months. I have put together a plan that will assist you to prepare for your next show. I recommend you allow yourself twelve months preparation for your first show to be sure you present your optimum on stage.

**Twelve to eight months out**

- Choose a competition date.
- Get yourself a trainer, preferably someone who specialises in body shaping/competing.
- Create a nutrition plan.
- Buy a training diary and get used to logging everything!
- Think about music for your routine.
- Research posing suits and have a think about colours.



# Rosa-Maria Romero

**IFBB PRO FIGURE COMPETITOR**

Cover Model, TV Presenter, Personal Trainer



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JULIO ARENAS

**Eight to five months out**

- Have your trainer provide you with ongoing feedback. Would also be great to see a judge if you can.
- Revise your diet and start eliminating cheat meals if necessary.
- Locate someone who can professionally edit your music for the routine.
- Choose a designer for your suit. You will need one to two outfits for your show – for pre-judging and the finals.
- Buy your posing shoes. I buy mine from Risqué in Kings Cross. They

always have a great selection. Tell them I sent you and receive a 10% discount! Go for a clear shoe with a five or six-inch heel.

**Five to three months out**

- Time to start posing!
- Practise your routine.
- Keep a track of your statistics such as bodyfat and weight.
- Change your training and diet as instructed by your trainer.

**Three to two months out**

- Find out weight class details and

register with your federation. You may also be required to pay a membership fee which is usually around \$100.

- Make sure that you are getting plenty of rest so you don't burn out. A good thing to remember is that your body grows when you rest!

**Two months out**

- Buy your tanning products. I use Jan Tanna 'On Stage'.
- Get some Bikini Bite. You'll need this to glue down your bikini, so it doesn't creep up in the wrong places!
- Book your hair and make-up stylist. I use Bonita Chan: [www.bonita.com.au](http://www.bonita.com.au).
- Make your pedicure and manicure appointments.
- Think about personal items you need to take to the contest.

**One month out**

- Stay focused! It gets real hard from here onwards.
- See your trainer for advice and feedback at least once a week.
- Your diet, cardio and weight training will change now and it will become quite intense.
- Continue to practise your routine and posing. The more you pose, the harder you get and judges love condition!
- Work on your base tan.
- Try and find a helper for the day who will be able to assist with your colour and suit adjustments.

**Three weeks to one week out**

- You will need to put together a competition checklist. Your trainer should be able to help you with this.
- Continue posing, as practice makes perfect!
- Rest, rest, rest!

**Day of Contest**

- Rise and shine, nice and early. You want to be as prepared as possible. Get to the venue as soon as possible and register.
- Ask about the running order of the day and find out when you are required onstage.
- Get yourself settled.
- Have fun, enjoy the day and go for gold!

I look forward to hearing about your progress and I wish you the very best of luck. **M&F**

*Good luck,  
Rosa*