



**H**ave you ever flipped through Oxygen and wished you could be one of the gorgeous fitness model that grace our pages? We tell you how in our feature that looks into the career of a fitness model - the glamour, sweat and protein shakes of it all.

BY MAYA ANDERSON

PHOTO: JULIO ARENAS

ROSA-MARIA ROMERO

**So** you want  
to be a...



**If you love health and fitness and continually strive to be your fittest and best, fitness modelling could be a great hobby or even a career for you.**

Amanda Henning is the director of modelling agency Sports Star Entertainment which represents fitness models such as Oxygen columnist Rosa-Maria Romero. She says a career in fitness modelling can be hugely rewarding for fitness fanatics who love the health industry. "The best part of being a fitness model is prospering financially for something that you love to do and being recognised for all your dedication to training," Amanda says. "It's also a fantastic opportunity to get yourself known with the hopes of possible product endorsements or sponsorships."

The job can also be a great way to branch out in the industry. Rosa-Maria Romero is not only one of Australia's most successful fitness models - she's also a television presenter, IFBB Figure Pro competitor, personal trainer, flight attendant and dancer. Rosa-Maria has appeared in more than 40 publications, and had a presenting role on Mornings with Kerri-Anne promoting fitness and beauty products. Rosa-Maria says getting to know "the most amazing and talented people you meet along the way" is her favourite part of fitness modelling. "I love travelling too," she says. "I had an awesome time shooting in California recently. It's also exciting to see your photos in print. It's a nice payoff for all the hard work you have done over the past years, sweating it out at the gym - it all makes sense in the end!"

Rosa began weight training in 2003. "I entered my first Figure competition in October 2003 and to my surprise took out the Australian title for the

WNSO/ANB - my first competition a national title!" Rosa-Maria used her win to its advantage and approached Channels Nine and 10 for promotional work. "For over 12 months I worked with Kerri-Anne and Bert promoting fitness and beauty products," she says. She was then scouted for several infomercials, and shot a national infomercial in the U.S for the Bun and Thigh Shaper.

### what the job involves

Being a fitness model means you could appear in a variety of publications, like our 2006 WA Oxygen Sports Model contest winner Lina Jade Mitchell, who has appeared in MuscleMag, Oxygen, calendars and ads for Australian Sports Nutrition, the company she also works for as a sales consultant. She is the face of the building company Weathertex and has her own website, [www.linajade.com](http://www.linajade.com). "I was a child model doing fashion catwalks at shopping centres as well as magazines, newspaper and TV commercials," Lina says. "As I grew

older I started getting back into modelling which was mainly features like Ralph, calendars, websites, car mags and doing national modelling comps like Miss Indy. This was never really fulfilling for me and health and fitness have always been a major part of my life, so I decided to move into the direction of fitness modelling." She competed in five sports modelling contests in the past year, winning all but one.

### where you can work

"Sports models are sought after in many facets of modelling, including infomercials on TV, sports and fitness magazines, gym and swimwear catalogues and of course fitness expos and trade shows," Amanda says. If you're on an agency's books, you could appear in calendars, become the face of a particular company or endorse a product range.

### a day on the job

It's unlikely that you'll arrive at every job always knowing exactly what to expect.



MONTHS OF TRAINING

# Fitness Model?



# "IT'S NEVER TOO LATE AT ALL. LOOK AT ELAINE GOODLAD! SHE IS OVER 40 AND ALWAYS LOOKS GLAMOROUS."

Your jobs could take place in a studio, or "on location", which means shooting wherever the photographer wants. The hours can be long - bring food, water and a magazine because there'll be times when you'll have nothing to do.

Being a fitness model means you may have to be ready for a photo shoot at just a fortnight's notice so try not to wander far from your ideal weight year-round. Fitness model and IFBB pro Tosca Reno says that with just two weeks notice, a tighter diet, extra cardio and intense training should help you shed any extra kilos quickly. A good idea is to avoid sodium for the last three days prior to the shoot - this way you won't retain excess water and look bloated. Drink distilled water instead.

## the pros

Modelling can also be a great job if you're interested in travelling. "I travel all over Australia competing and doing photo shoots and promotions for my website," Lina says. "I'm heading over to America to compete over there and shoot with some great photographers."

A great thing about fitness modelling is that even if you're tiny, you can do it - for example, Lina is 160cm tall. "Unlike catwalk models there is no height requirement in fitness modelling - we look at their overall physique and how they carry themselves," Amanda says.

And of course, it rarely gets tiresome seeing a great photo of you in a magazine! Rosa defines the most memorable moments in her career as shooting for her first magazine cover and seeing her face grace the pages of Oxygen magazine.

## the cons

"Some of the not-so-pleasant aspects would be having to wear Lycra in the

cold winter months, or equally unpleasant hot scorching months!" Amanda laughs. "On a more serious note, a fitness model needs to maintain a healthy, fit appearance by eating well, training hard and getting sufficient rest. With this in mind, prioritising all that over a social life is a must." Be prepared to cut back on boozy nights out and other social activities. "Sometimes I find it hard to juggle my work, especially when I have so much on - also the fact that you have to constantly be in great shape and maintained all the time," Lina admits. "These little things take time, like hair, waxing, tanning, training, nails, etc."

Having to sit still for hours in a hair and makeup chair, or having to do your own face, is many models' pet peeve of the job. "I also dislike applying makeup - wish I didn't have to wear any," Rosa-Maria laughs. Long hours sitting about waiting while on a shoot can be torturous if you don't have anything to do - bring an iPod or Oxygen to wile away the time.

## what it pays

Fitness modelling pay depends on the work you do. "Trade shows pay between \$20 to \$30 an hour, depending on who your agent is," Amanda says. "Photo shoots start at around \$250 and go up depending on the length of time the shoot takes and where the photos will be published. Infomercials and TV work also pay well, but it varies depending on whether it's an ongoing situation."

Obviously, the more well-known you are, the more you will be able to earn. Expect to start off modestly, but when you get going, the wage can be decent - and expect more if you shoot for a cover. "These days depending on the job my average would be \$1500 to \$3000 for a two to four photo shoot - plus royalties if my pictures are used again," Lina says.

## personality counts

"A fitness model needs to be bubbly and alive," Rosa-Maria says. You'll need an upbeat personality, confidence and an ability to communicate on all levels to truly succeed.

You'll also need to be a stickler for punctuality - divas who don't show up on time for modelling jobs won't be booked again. If you're staying at a hotel, arrange a wakeup call or get the photographer to give you a ring.







MEL ZIMMERMAN FITNESS MODEL GIRLS

## "WHEN ONE THINKS OF FITNESS, HEALTH AND HAPPINESS POPS TO MIND. A FITNESS MODEL NEEDS TO BE ABLE TO BRING THIS ACROSS IN A PHOTO SHOOT."

### let's get started

"First thing first - the gym!" Rosa-Maria says. You'll need to be in great shape before you even think about approaching agencies. "Perhaps enter a Fitness model competition and enjoy the experience," Rosa-Maria suggests. "At the same time, you will be building confidence and learning about the industry. There are many photographers at fitness model competitions and it's a good way to meet people in the industry." Bring along some business cards and network.

While you should be careful that you're never getting ripped off or exploited, it's worth getting your face out there, even if it may mean working for very little or nothing. "When I first started I did some articles for free," Lina says. "I was happy to get my pics published and to get recognised." Her initiative paid off - these days she can

command much higher rates.

Most importantly, always keep training. "I train six times a week and love it," Rosa-Maria says. Food is also extremely important. It might be worth enlisting the help of a personal trainer and a nutritionist, and take care to always keep your hair and nails in good condition and your skin healthy and (fake) tanned.

### have I left it too late?

You don't have to be a fashion addict to notice that in the world of modelling, models seem to be getting younger by the second. In a famed episode of *Absolutely Fabulous*, Magda was watching fashion models on a catwalk when she said, "If the models get any younger they'll be throwing foetuses up there next." The good thing about fitness modelling is that you don't have to be a pre-pubescent waif

to make it big. "It's never too late at all," Rosa-Maria says firmly. "Look at Elaine Goodlad! She is over 40 and always looks glamorous - someone I very much look up to."

While Amanda says the ideal age to begin fitness modelling is 19, she also says that a fitness model who remains in optimum shape can have at least 15 years of work ahead of her. Lina agrees. "Like anything, it's good to start young, but as long as you're in great shape and you have something to offer then go for it! This industry is unique in that it's not generally restricted to certain age groups... a lot of the fitness models are in their 30s, 40s and 50s and they look fantastic."

### how do I find a job?

Models should be extremely cautious about who they do business with. To give an example of the risks involved, in Victoria there are no registration requirements, so anybody can set up a modelling agency and market themselves as a leading professional in the industry. To find a reputable agency, do an internet search about particular modelling agencies to determine if there are allegations made against them. Check with your state's Consumer Affairs department to see if they have issued a public warning about unfair business practices against a particular agency.

Be forward and believe in yourself, says Lina. "It's not really hard to get your foot in the door - it's more believing in yourself and pushing yourself through the door, even if they don't want you in there!" she laughs. "You need to get noticed. Email or send your pics into various mags, calendars and websites and attend events that are associated with the fitness industry." You will generally find people from magazines will be attending, as well as all kinds of people in the fitness industry.

Get together a portfolio that features a range of shots. "A portfolio of professional photos is an absolute must," Amanda says. "Agents can put potential models in contact with photographers to suit any budget. Home snapshots simply



## Are you an Oxygen Cover Girl?

Can you imagine yourself on the cover of Oxygen? If so we would love to hear from you. Send your fitness photos and profiles to Editor Oxygen Magazine, PO Box 41, Maylands, WA 6931 or email [editorial@oxygenmag.com.au](mailto:editorial@oxygenmag.com.au).

will not cut it. Think of it as your key to the door of your career and success."

### ace your jobs

Don't worry if you're nervous on your first job - it's natural! "My first photo shoot was with Gary Phillips for Muscle and Fitness and I remember just how nervous I was," laughs Rosa-Maria. "Getting used to working in front of a camera, your best poses, freezing conditions...it's all a learning experience. The more you do, the better you get. Now I can't wait to be in front of the camera - I just love the buzz."

A positive, friendly attitude, being easy to deal and treating people with respect will definitely help you move up, says Amanda. "Being punctual and reliable with a happy disposition assures a model's success. Remember agents and photographers talk, so if someone is outstanding to work with the word spreads just as quickly as negative feedback."

Arrive at your jobs with shaved legs, clean hair and a make-up free face. And don't forget to spray tan before - bronzed skin looks healthier under glaring camera lights.

### trouble getting your foot in the door?

"Make sure you're in the best shape you can be - this includes training and leading a healthy lifestyle," Lina says. "Believe in yourself and think about what you want to achieve and where you want to be. Good personal presentation is a must - this includes everything from nails, hair, skin, waxing."

You could give modelling or deportment classes a whirl. "Modelling and deportment classes aren't essential for fitness models, though they could be helpful in confidence boosting," Amanda says. Lina is one model who took deportment and catwalk classes when she was younger and loved them. "I must say it has helped me a lot - personal presentation, the way you carry yourself and organisation are essential," she says.

### expand your horizons

While models who are cooperative and give every photo their best effort are a photographer's dream, often it won't hurt to suggest an idea you might have - after all, you're there to create a great image. Fitness model and IFBB pro Tosca Reno suggests letting the photographer know if you can do something physical that's a little unusual or interesting, like one arm



MELISSA MCGARRY (SYDNEY OVERALL CHAMPION FITNESS MODEL)

chins, handstands or back flips, because he or she might like to record it on film. Whatever your talent, it could have the capacity to make a dynamic image.

Don't stop training hard, bettering your body, learning about nutrition and the newest events and contests in the fitness modelling world. "To be a fitness model you will have to train and stay in shape all year round," Rosa says. "Put in the hard yards and the rewards will come. Believe in yourself and follow your dreams." ☺

## Making It - Tips From The Experts

"Don't be shy, find yourself a good agent, train hard, eat well, drink plenty of fluid, believe in yourself, follow your dreams and submit your photos - what have you got to lose?" - Rosa-Maria Romero, fitness model and IFBB Figure Pro

"Good personal presentation is a must - this includes everything from nails, hair, skin, waxing etc, and this also includes the way you carry yourself... attention to detail is essential and will give you the extra edge." - Lina Jade Mitchell, 2006 WA Oxygen Sports Model Contest winner

"Being punctual and reliable with a happy disposition assures a model's success. Remember agents and photographers talk, so if someone is outstanding to work with the word spreads just as quickly as negative feedback." - Amanda Henning, Sports Star Entertainment director

**NEXT ISSUE:** Think you would be suited to upholding the law? Don't miss out on our next issue where we tell you what you need to know to become a police officer.