

SEPTEMBER 2015

LADYBIRD

Fashion & Lifestyle 

THE PLANET IS
YOURS

THE
YOUTHFUL
POWER OF
Pomegranate

FITNESS,
Without
Throwing a Fit

BATHROOMS
INSPIRATIONS
AND SCHEMES

MEET
Lebanese Fitness Star
MAYA NASSAR

NOSTALGIA
TO THE
70s

Editorial Features

GET FIT WITH

MAYA NASSAR

A certified sports nutritionist, personal trainer, and founder of Start Living Right mission that aims to inspire millions of people across the world with ultimate healthy lifestyles



TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF.

I used to be overweight and had no background in fitness. After gaining a significant amount of weight, I turned my lifestyle around through healthy eating and exercise. This changed my life and made me develop a passion for fitness. After that, I became certified in personal training and sports nutrition. I also compete abroad in bikini fitness competitions.

AS A SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLE OF BODY TRANSFORMATION, HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO DO THIS?

I did this through lots of hard work and consistency! I'm always telling people that there is no magic bullet when it comes to a successful body transformation. If you want to see results, you will have to follow a healthy diet and exercise regularly. The final step is consistency. It is not enough to practice a healthy lifestyle for a couple of weeks. You will need to work hard for up to 2 or 3 months to notice a significant difference.

HOW DID YOU OVERCOME CRAVINGS?

I overcame my cravings through a lot of mental discipline. I used to live on unhealthy food and it was very challenging to change my eating habits. However, I always say that it takes three weeks to establish a new habit. This means that after three weeks of eating healthy food, your cravings will eventually disappear and will become a lot easier to control. Junk food serves zero nutritional value and only makes you feel worse in the long run.





WHAT ARE YOUR SOURCES OF INSPIRATION?

I think about my goals in order to stay inspired. For example, if I am training for a bikini fitness competition, I visualize how good I will feel once I step on stage and build the body I really want. Quite often we lose motivation because the journey is so challenging and we forget how good we will feel once we reach our final destination.

HOW DID YOU COME UP WITH IDEA OF LAUNCHING THE 'START LIVING RIGHT' MOBILE APP?

I created a website called Start Living Right to help change people's lives and offer a free platform to educate others about health and fitness. The success of my website inspired me to create a mobile version which is something handy that people can use at their fingertips at any time they like. My mobile application offers helpful tools such as fat loss calculators, calorie counters, fitness programs, healthy recipes, and a lot more. It can be downloaded for free by searching for "startlivingright" from any smartphone store. My mobile application has already been ranked as the number one app by the Apple store. My goal is to change peoples' lives and help anyone who is struggling to get into shape.

WHAT ABOUT YOUR AMAZING EPISODES AND MOTIVATIONAL WORKSHOPS.

Earlier this year, I competed for the third year in a row in bikini fitness in the United Kingdom and this is what inspired me to start my short weekly episodes. Every week, I would film a short episode documenting my progress and preparation for my upcoming competition. It would cover motivation, nutrition, and also training. These episodes can be viewed by visiting my website: www.startlivingright.net or by downloading my app "startlivingright".

I also give motivational workshops and was recently in Russia this June. I like to share my story and prove that if I can do it, then anyone else can do it too. I believe fitness is a mental challenge and this is why I always include a motivational section when I give seminars or workshops.





TELL US ABOUT HOW YOU EMPOWER OTHER WOMEN.

I like to empower other women by inspiring them to live a healthier and better lifestyle. Achieving your fitness goals helps you reach all other goals in your life too. Besides, being fit and healthy will make a woman a lot more confident which will make her happier. I always say that when you become fit it is not only your body that changes, but your whole life too.

WHAT ABOUT YOUR CONTRIBUTION IN THE SPORTS CALENDAR?

I took part in the first ever 2015 Lebanese sports calendar to raise money for charity. The calendar featured 12 Lebanese athletes from different disciplines and I was extremely honored to take part.

DESCRIBE YOUR JOURNEY IN FITNESS MODELING CHAMPIONSHIPS.

I used to be overweight and after losing all the weight I had gained, I set a new challenge and wanted to start competing in fitness modeling competitions. It was a transition from being too insecure to walk on the beach to stepping on stage next to top fitness models. I entered my first competition in the UK in 2013 but didn't win any prizes. I competed again in 2014 and won first place in bikini fitness and re-entered in 2015 and won three trophies this year.



WHAT KIND OF CHALLENGES AND DIFFICULTIES DID YOU FACE IN BIKINI COMPETITIONS?

The most difficult challenge is following a diet for a bikini competition. I have to eat very strictly and need to measure all of my food portions. I stop dining out and my life revolves around dieting and training. One other challenge is trying hard not to compare myself against other competitors. I always tell myself that fitness is a challenge against myself only, and as long as I am in the best shape of my life, then I have won.

AS A PROFESSIONAL TRAINER, TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOUR DAILY DIET AND EXERCISE REGIMEN. HOW CAN YOU MAINTAIN A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE?

I train with weights five times a week and do cardio approximately two to three times a week as a lifestyle. If I am training for a competition, I do cardio up to six times a week. My diet consists of healthy food such as fruits, veggies, whole grains, protein, and healthy fats. I stay away from white carbs, junk food, sweets, as well as restrict such meals to once or twice a week only.

WHAT ABOUT DECATHLON?

In June 2015, I became the brand ambassador of Decathlon in Lebanon. Decathlon is an international retailer that sells sports clothing, equipment, accessories, and pretty much everything. In our collaboration, I am the fitness expert for Decathlon and I answer all questions of their clients. I also make in-store appearances and meet with their clients to answer their questions.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

My next goal is to open up my own gym. I also have plans to continue competing in bikini fitness and to add even more features to my mobile application.