

Maya Nassar is a personal trainer, a fitness model, a sports nutritionist as well as a young entrepreneur who fought and won a battle with her old weak-willed self creating an inspiring journey of determination, persistence and fortitude for people to follow...

# Maya Nassar

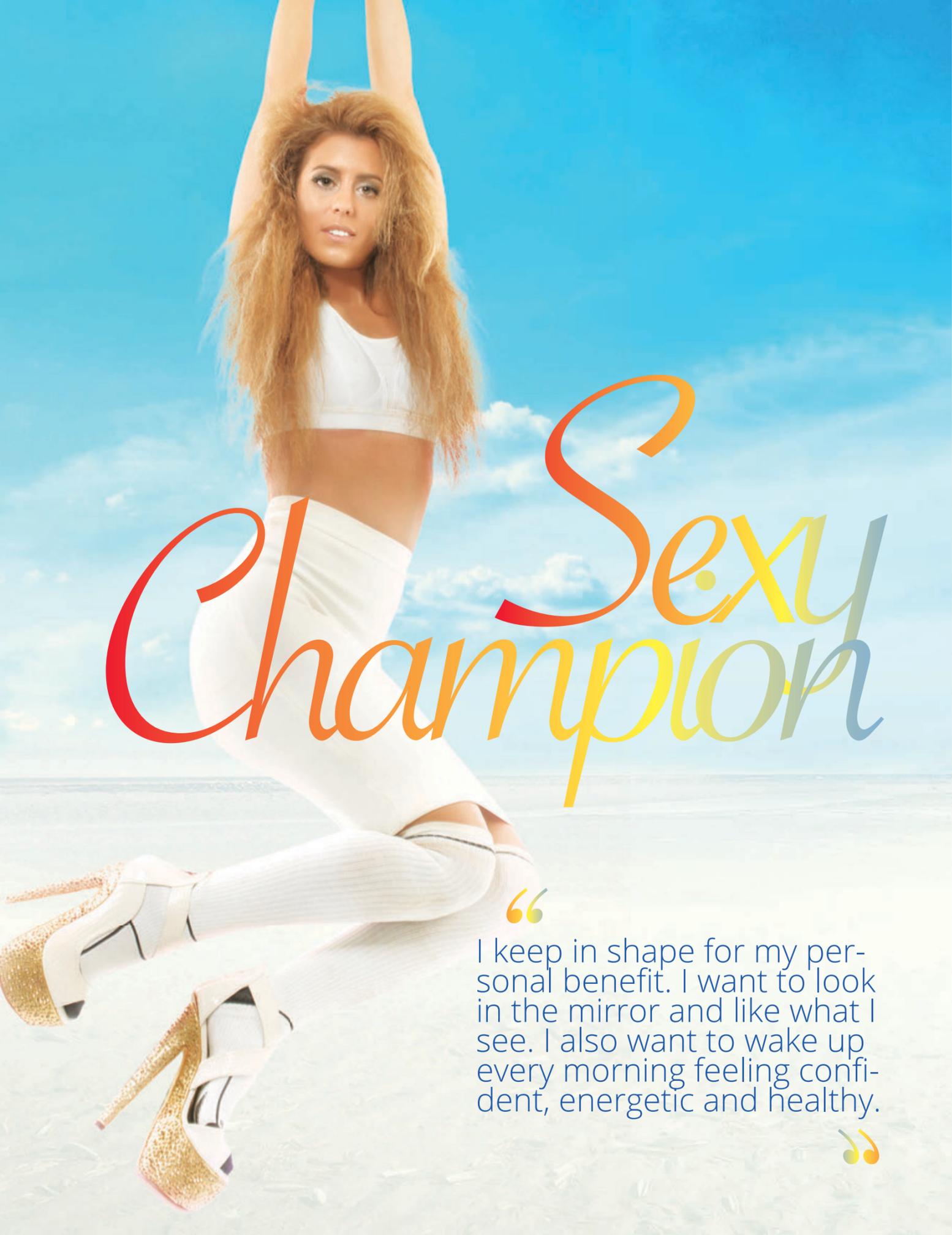
Middle East's rising fitness star

By Rania Ihab



Photography by: Carine Badr | Art Direction by: sherief Tarhini | Makeup by: Richard Ghareeb for Beautique by Bouba | Hair by: Abel Saleh from Yehya and Zakaria

ENTREPRENEUR



# Sexy Champion

I keep in shape for my personal benefit. I want to look in the mirror and like what I see. I also want to wake up every morning feeling confident, energetic and healthy.

## MY PERSONAL belief is that you should PRACTICE WHAT you preach

### Talk to us about your inspiring health journey.

I never had a background in fitness. When I was younger, I had an extremely unhealthy lifestyle and ended up gaining a lot of weight. I used to eat unhealthy food on a daily basis and never did any exercise. After reaching my heaviest five years ago, I decided it was time to change for the better and get into shape. I realized I am responsible for my own lifestyle and I did not want to feel insecure or self-conscious about my body.

### What were the hardest challenges that faced you?

The hardest challenge was probably my diet. I found it really hard to give up the junk food that I loved and eat healthy meals like chicken, fish and vegetables. However, one of my favorite quotes is, "Nothing tastes as good as skinny feels"- Kate Moss.

### When did you discover your interest in bikini competitions and what drove you to this pass?

After achieving one goal of reaching my ideal weight, I wanted to set a new challenge. I believe we should never stop setting goals and challenging ourselves to do better. I knew that the ultimate challenge would be competing in a bikini fitness competition and standing on stage next to top fitness models. I wanted to be the girl who went from being too insecure to walk around the beach to getting into the best shape of my life and stepping on stage as a fitness model.

### Tell us about your experience at 'Pure Elite UK Championship'.

I had an amazing experience. I won first place last year in my second competition and was extremely flattered as I was competing against some really beautiful women. My third competition was in April and I took home three trophies: One 2nd place, one 3rd place and best of all I was voted the overall female winner by the audience out of more than 200 competitors.

### How did you become certified

### by 'International Fitness Professionals Association'?

After getting into shape and doing a lot of reading about fitness and nutrition, I enrolled in courses by the 'International Fitness Professionals Association' and got my certification. However, my personal belief is that you should practice what you preach. It is not enough for me to just be certified if I do not practice the things I want to teach others about. This is exactly why I participate in competitions in order to show others that if I can do it, then they can do it too.

### You also have your own application 'Start Living Right'.

I created the first ever mobile application in Lebanon. It is endorsed by the minister of sports and has also been ranked as the number one fitness application by the Apple Store. The application is a free mobile version of my website startlivingright.net and it offers useful tools to help others live a healthier lifestyle.

### What about your role as a board member of 'Animals Lebanon'?

I have always been a passionate animal lover. Animals Lebanon is currently the largest animal welfare in the Middle East and I am a very proud board member.

### What are your plans for 2015?

To stay in shape and help change people's lives and to work on my goal of opening my own gym.

### Do you feel pressure to be in perfect shape?

Not really! I keep in shape for my personal benefit. I want to look in the mirror and like what I see. I also want to wake up every morning feeling confident, energetic and healthy.

### What do you like best and least about your body?

What I like best about my body is my physical strength. I never knew I could get into such great shape and train as hard as I do.

What I like least is that I have average genes. I can't eat whatever I like and not gain weight. I have to work very hard to stay in shape. However, I am a firm believer that the harder I train and the stricter I diet, the better my genes become.

### What one thing do you never skip in your workout?

I never skip leg training as I carry most of my fat around my lower body and it is vital that I always train my legs.

### What's the best way for someone to motivate herself to get fit?

I would say to have some sort of emotional attachment to your fitness goals. Think about how good you will feel if you build the best body you've ever had. Establishing why it is important to you to get into shape is what will motivate you to never give up.

### You were overweight as a kid. Are you still influenced by an inner fat girl?

Definitely! Deep down there is a girl who loves to eat and I have to be disciplined every single day. However, a lifestyle of health and fitness is far more rewarding than eating junk food and feeling insecure.

### What's the biggest mistake that fitness newbies make?

Doing cardio without lifting weights. Weightlifting is the best thing that that will ever happen to a fitness newbie. It will transform your body naturally and help the fat melt off. It also builds incredible mental strength.

### Bikini season is knocking the doors, what are your 101 tips to our readers?

The best advice I can give is to work hard towards getting in shape and to avoid extreme diets or scams. Diet pills, starvation diets or scams that promise results with little or no effort are very dangerous for your health. If you want to get into shape, eat healthy and exercise. There is no magic bullet that will help you get into shape if you do not work for it.



*I participate in*

COMPETITIONS

*in order to show others that if I can do it*

**THEN  
THEY**

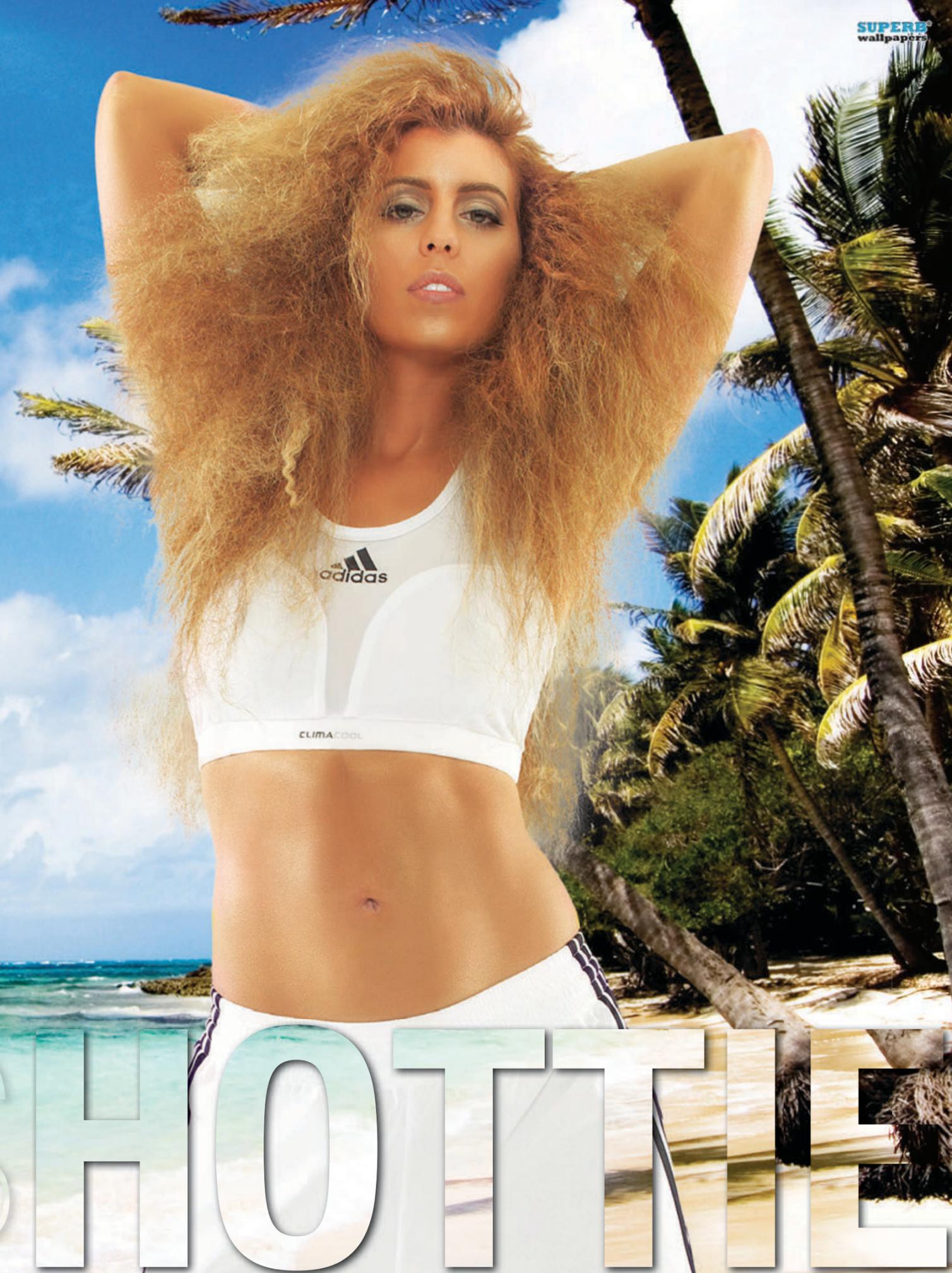
CAN DO IT

**T00**

**MAYA**



FITNESS SHOTTIME



**CONFIDENT**

**HEALTHY**

**ENERGETIC**

