

INDULGING IN THE GLEE OF FITNESS

Interview

with
**Maya
Nasser**

“The best project you’ll ever work on is you.” - *Anonymous*

Most of us aren’t athletes, but we all can be fit! Listen to Maya Nasser, the fitness instructor and sports nutritionist from Lebanon who succeeded to fight off her unhealthy habits and rise up to the challenge of earning first places in international modeling competitions! We have teamed up with her so she lets us in on her secrets to living well. She talked to us about incorporating fitness into day-to-day life, the importance of a good diet and her top tips for endurance and recovery. It’s a lot of fun and only the beginning of it! Let’s get started!

When did you discover your passion for fitness?

I first discovered my passion for fitness after gaining a lot of weight and feeling quite insecure about my body. I initially had no background in fitness and used to lead a very unhealthy lifestyle. I used to eat lots of bad food and never do any exercise. After hitting rock bottom, I had a wakeup call and I realized that I am responsible for my own lifestyle. I did not want to end up majorly overweight and unhealthy. This is when I started going to the gym and completely changing my diet.

How about your experience with modeling competitions?

After losing all my excess weight and reaching my ideal weight, I decided it was time for a new challenge. I did not want to stop there. This is when I had heard about fitness modeling competitions. I had heard that these competitions require you to push to your limits mentally and physically with a strict diet and intensive training. I realized that I enjoy the fit and healthy lifestyle and was really excited to challenge into a competition. I have now competed for a total of four years and have won six trophies in total.

How do you manage to keep yourself motivated?

I keep myself motivated by reminding myself of how rewarding a lifestyle of health and fitness is. I compare my old lifestyle to the one I’m adopting now and realize that it is always worth it to get up and exercise and eat healthy food. Health and fitness are not just about the way you look and feel but also about prolonging your life so as to be around as your grandchildren grow up. We all have days when we don’t feel motivated, but what matters is consistency. I always say you will never get anything done, if you only work hard on the days you feel good.

Your definition of a Figure Extraordinaire?!

My ideal figure would be one that is curvy but also athletic. Many girls contact me saying they want to be skinny but I always say when you train, you should do so to become healthy, fit and strong. I also like soft and feminine muscle definition.

The relaxation technique that always gets your Zen on?

Sitting quietly at home in my garden always helps me relax. I think it is very important to take time for yourself to just relax and unwind.



Piece of advice for the ladies out there to look their best?
Lift weights! Many women falsely believe that they will bulk up and look like a man if they lift weights. This is incorrect. Women do not have enough testosterone in their bodies to bulk up like a man, unless they were to take steroids. Lifting weights has been proven to boost metabolism, help burn fat and also shape and tone the body.

Workouts that give the best outcome?

For the best results, a woman should lift weights and do cardio. Cardio is any physical activity that increases the heart rate such as swimming, cycling, jogging, etc. Women should train all muscles in the body and do cardio at least three times a week for optimal results. However, it is also important to follow a healthy diet as you will never achieve desirable outcome if you are not eating properly.

Fitness tips that would double the result of exercise?

One quick and easy way to lose weight without changing anything in your diet is not to drink any liquid calories. Many beverages are very high in calories and because liquid calories are not satiating. It is very easy to overindulge. My advice is to stick to water, coffee and tea, and to always use low calorie sweeteners. My other tip is to eat natural, unprocessed foods every day and to restrict junk food and sweets to no more than once or twice a week. It might be hard at first, but it takes three weeks to establish a new habit. Cravings for

Zen Island

How does it feel to have all your dreams come true?

It feels great! But I believe that not all my dreams have come true yet. Dreams and successes are maintained by those who try and keep on trying. Once a person achieves one goal, I believe it is time to set another.

Can you put a price tag on happiness?

I don’t believe you can put a price tag on happiness. This is because the best things in life are for free.

What puts you in a good mood?

Being with friends, family and my pets always put me in a good mood.

What puts a huge smile on your face?

Hearing that I helped someone reach their fitness goals or that I changed their life in some way.

What life experiences do you want to have next?

I hope to experience new challenges that will make me a better, stronger and more ambitious person.

sweets and sugar will eventually disappear and our bodies will become conditioned to eating healthy. healthy food is the only food our bodies are actually craving. It is essential to follow a good diet in order to see physical results from exercise.

New, feel-good fitness trends?

There are lots of stylish, sporty and comfortable outfits out there. It is important to feel your best exercising; and when you are wearing a stylish sports outfit, you feel motivated to work out and reach your fitness goals.

Strong obvious muscles or a naturally toned figure?

Somewhere in the middle! I would choose a curvaceous figure with soft muscle definition.

The feel-good factor about exercising?

When we exercise, our bodies release anti-stress hormones called endorphins. These hormones help you feel really good, happy and positive. It has been proven that exercise can be a more effective form of therapy for depressed people than antidepressants. Exercise helps you cope with stress and feel more relaxed in your everyday life.

The most exciting moment in your career?

This was back in 2014 when I won first place in Pure Elite bikini fitness competition. This is what made me say I have officially reached all my goals.



Out & About

My Joie-De-Vivre moto is... **Face your fears and do things that scare you!**

- Things I barely go out without... **My mobile phone and a smile on my face.**

- My all-time role model ... **Tom Venuto! He is a bodybuilder who wrote a book that totally changed my life.**

- If I weren’t a fitness coach, I would be... **a counselor. I really enjoy listening to other people and helping them with their problems.**

- Life will be happier if... **we all respected each other and celebrated our differences. The world would be such a boring place if we were all the same.**