



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

SOLID ADVICE

Hi Rosa,

I'm training to compete in the next INBA in the ACT in the figure division. I am about 15 weeks out and trying to determine if I am on the right track. I'm currently on an eating plan of about five meals a day. I have definitely lost bodyfat as I can feel it but I just don't know if I am losing the right amount or if I am losing it quickly enough. I currently train six days a week with 40-minute cardio sessions at a time. I think my biggest worry is not getting lean enough!

How close to the date should I be eliminating carbohydrates? My last carb meal is at about 2 to 2.30pm. I'm scared that I'm plateauing now and that I am not losing fat. Should I be increasing my cardio? I am 166 cm tall and currently weigh 57.5 kg. My husband (who's been in the bodybuilding industry a long time) said that I should not drop past 52 kg. Does this sound right to you?

Sanja Hodgson,
ACT

Hi Sanja,

Well, I can definitely understand why you're feeling so confused and anxious at this point in

time. This is completely normal and expected from anyone getting ready for a show. What we do is so hard and when you read and hear about conflicting facts and ideas, it can be difficult to make a decision and stick with it. Should I come in lean? Will the judges prefer a fuller look as opposed to ripped? What weight should I compete at? So many questions and no answers! I have been there myself many times before and I do feel for you. Try and focus on yourself and concentrate on your training. It is important you get through one day at a time.

Eventually everything will fall into place. As long as you stick to your diet and complete all cardio sessions, your body will begin to change. It is a little difficult for me to give you an in depth answer as to whether you are on track or not without me seeing any photographs of your current shape and size.

Generally when I am getting ready for a show I will lose about 8 to 10 kg during the cutting up phase. I normally compete at about 53 kg but I know of other pro girls who compete close to 58 kg. So, it all depends on your body, size and the look you would like to present on stage. I know from clients and shows that I have seen, that the INBA tend to go for a lean look with most of their girls. Try and come in as lean and tight as possible without losing too much

muscle in the process. Work on your symmetry and bodylines and remember that presentation is just as important, so give yourself plenty of time to perfect your poses.

Now in regards to your diet and eliminating carbohydrates: honestly, I consume carbohydrates all the way through, but I have clients that only consume one carb meal a day! It varies from person to person. Personally, I cannot train effectively without a sufficient intake of carbohydrates daily so eliminating carbs for me is definitely a no-no. If I need to lose more weight then I will increase the cardio or include track workouts into my training programme. Just make sure you are losing between 0.5 and 1 kg per week and when you have reached your desired weight and feel good about the way you look, slow it down or 'pull the handbrake' as my husband Sam tells me and ease your way onto the stage!

Enjoy the process Sanja, this will be one of the biggest challenges of your life. I look forward to seeing your amazing pictures.

Stay focused,
Rosa

NOT SYMMETRICAL

Hi Rosa,

I have a couple of questions I really need to ask your advice on please!



1. I'm right-handed, my right side (upper body) is smaller than my left side. I train them equally, but the left side seems to grow faster. It is actually one centimetre bigger than the right. I injured my right shoulder a couple of years ago, but I can still manage to lift more than my left side. Should I lift heavier on my right side?

2. What is the best exercise to target the middle delts? How heavy should I go? I'm struggling on them, aarghhh!

Thanks heaps,
Jeannie Linn

Hi Jeannie,

Sorry to hear about your injury. Sounds like you have made a good recovery so, well done, and it's good to hear you are back at the gym.

With regards to your left side being bigger than your right, I would suggest training both sides with the same weight but try and do an extra set or two on the right to compensate.

You should also try lifting heavier and have someone spot you when needed. I would say that over an extended period of time this will make a difference and you should start to see some changes.

Now to answer your second question: my favourite exercise for side delts would have to be the seated dumbbell side raise and seated dumbbell front raise. I will tend to go fairly light with the weights but I hold the lift for about two seconds and squeeze before bringing it down slowly. I find these two exercises really burn and I can feel it targeting the specific area being worked.

Keep training hard,
Rosa

MUSCLE LOSS

Dear Rosa,

I've followed your success and you were my unspoken mentor for many years. I have Graves disease and have had total thyroid removal. Pre-illness I had a good twelve months of solid training but the illness ate away a lot of muscle. I now have the all-clear from the doctor. Also, I'm on thyroxine medication for life and am aware that some foods are not allowed. It is my goal not to be deflated by this and not listen to all the negative comments on the net. I know that if I train hard and focus on clean eating (hopefully with your guidance) I can make a difference and maybe even mentor others. So far I have not found one person that is positive in all the information that I have read.

So my question to you, Rosa, is; is it possible for me to get my body back after

GENE X HWANG



CHARLIE SUPRIANO

everything I've been through and continue to struggle with? I am hoping to get in the best shape of my life.

Michelle

Hi Michelle,

Please don't be disheartened or feel that there is no hope for people with your condition. This is an extremely common case and you should not stop living your life or doing what you love just because of a hurdle you have been forced to overcome.

Yes, there is hope and yes, it is possible for you to get your body back. You will need to make some readjustments and changes but once this is done I am positive things will fall into place. You will begin to live your life the way you want to and achieve the things you thought were never possible. There is no reason why you cannot follow a similar diet to that of a bodybuilder.

You need to keep in mind that certain foods are regarded as goitrogenic, meaning that they contain enzymes. These foods are millet, peanuts, pine nuts, soya, cassava, peaches, pears and vegetables of the Brassica family including cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, spinach, mustard greens and turnips. Cooking seems to disable the enzymes so my advice to you is to avoid millet, peanuts, pine nuts and soya. You can eat as much fruit and vegetables as you desire in small amounts but just make sure that they are cooked. If your symptoms are severe, then perhaps avoid having these types of food altogether.

You will also need to keep in mind that certain foods interfere with the absorption of your medication. These foods include; iron supplements, multivitamins, calcium supplements, calcium fortified foods, soya and lemon balm. Michelle, I suggest you have a diet and workout programme specifically designed for you keeping in mind all of the above.

Get yourself back to the gym and on a regular training programme. It will not take long for your body to respond considering you used to be fit and active not so long ago. Once you have your daily routine sorted I am confident you will see changes in your body and become addicted to the gym and lifestyle once again. I would love to hear about your progress and if you have any more questions or need a little more guidance, please e-mail me. Determination is the key.

Good luck,
Rosa

I NEED HELP WITH MY SHAPE

Hi Rosa,

I used to compete in figure and powerlifting in the 60 kg division and gave up 3 years ago. Now I have put on 30 kg and am too fat to run. I am also 36 years old. Do you think I can get back to my old shape? I am obese at present. I mainly need help with my food and I am way too embarrassed to go back to the gym as they used to sponsor me in competitions. I really feel bad and don't fit into my clothes.

I have a busy, tiring job and 3 children and husband. I have a weights set at home, a ball, and treadmill. Currently I have started back for one week walking for 34 mins and running for 1 min on the treadmill. I really need some results so I feel that I can achieve a change. What do you think?

Thanks,
Renee

Hello Renee,

I know how busy you must be. I have two children of my own and a very hungry husband to feed! Sounds like you used to be really fit and I have no doubt in my mind that you could be that way again. I would love to see some contest shots so please do send them through.

So, you have a treadmill, a ball and weight set at home - fantastic! Use them! I would suggest doing fifty minutes cardio first thing in the morning on an empty stomach. Get up nice and early (just like I do) whilst everyone is asleep, put the Ipod on and go hard for a those fifty minutes! Any more than fifty and you will start to burn muscle.

I would also suggest an extra twenty-five minutes cardio last thing in the evening before bed. I guarantee that with a good diet and cardio six days a week, your body will begin to change and the weight will start to drop off.

Ensure your diet is balanced and have carbohydrates such as sweet potato, oats or basmati rice with meals 1 to 3. I would introduce about $\frac{1}{3}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of carbohydrates per meal. The idea is you stick with the diet and are consistent with your cardio on a daily basis.

Once you have reached a comfortable weight I'd love to see you go back to the gym so that you can work out with weights at least five days per week. It's all about getting your self back on to a routine and sticking to it.

In the meantime, use the ball and weights at home and incorporate them into your daily exercise plan. Train your biceps, abs, triceps, chest and whatever you can. Your body will start to respond and changes will become visible. It is never too late to get fit and I can feel your need for change in your letter so make the move - start tomorrow!

Go hard,
Rosa **M&F**

IFBB PRO FIGURE COMPETITOR

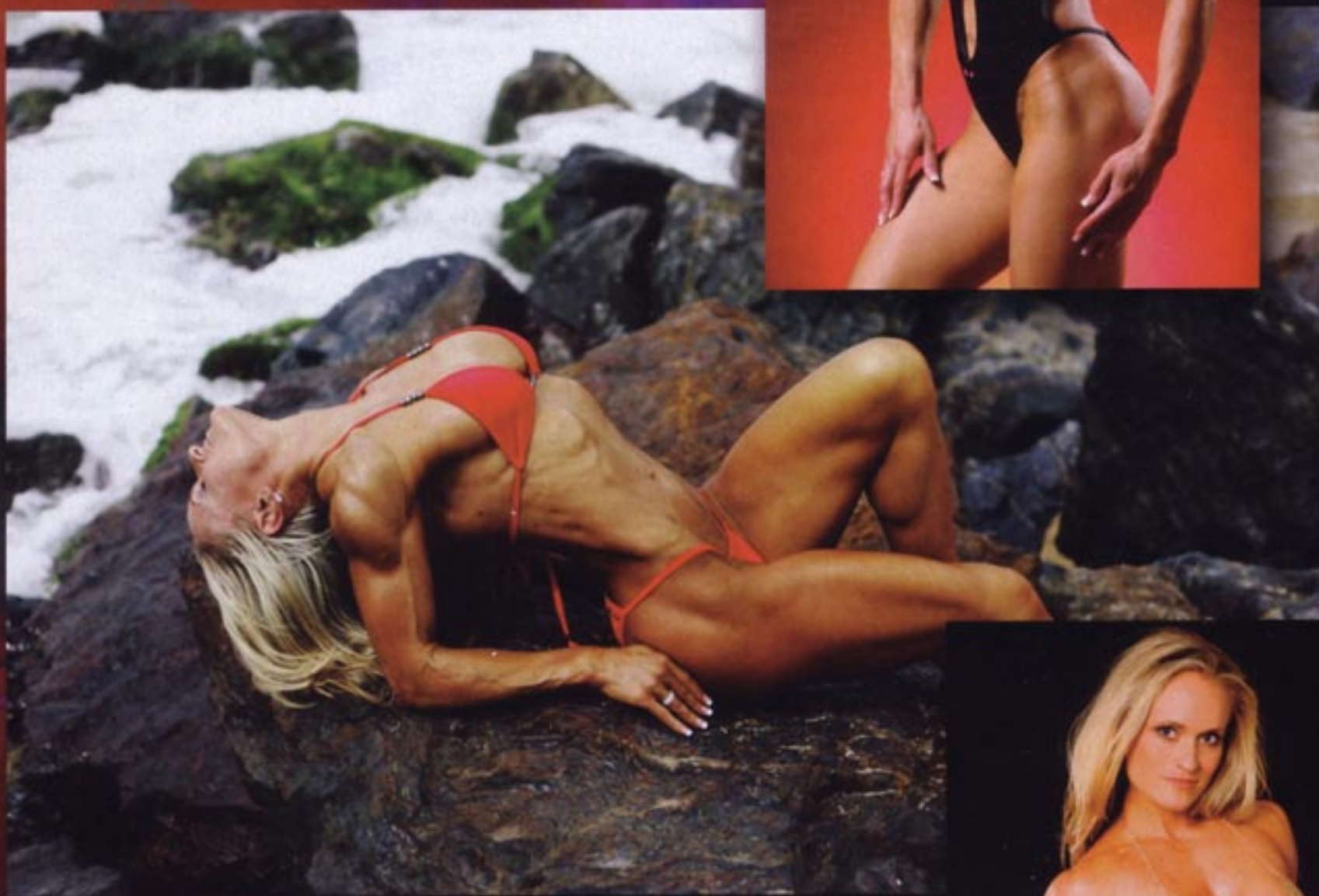
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