



# 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 QUESTION NOW TO [ROSE@FITROSE.COM](mailto:ROSE@FITROSE.COM)

## GREAT ABS

Dear Rosa,

I have always admired your body and think you have an ideal textbook figure physique. Your midsection is unbelievable! I train six days a week including two hours of weight training and one hour cardio per day but nothing seems to work. How can I get a midsection like yours?

Casey,  
Melbourne

Dear Casey,

I get asked this question all the time so don't think that you are alone! There is no simple answer. To be honest there are three factors we need to address in order to see results. They are: weight training, cardiovascular workouts and diet. All three are important in order to achieve results. Let me try to explain.

**WEIGHT TRAINING** - You should keep your weights nice and heavy and max out each set. Your last set should be extremely hard. Keep the reps between ten and twelve and the intensity nice and high. Do four exercises for each bodypart. Each bodypart should take you around 35 to 40 minutes to complete. Always remember to warm up before your workouts and keep a close eye on your posture and form.

There are many exercises you can do for your abs including crunches, leg and knee raises to name a few but have you ever thought of incorporating new exercises in order to shock the body? One of my favourites is the 'hip tuck on a stability ball'. In a push-up position with your shins on the ball, roll your knees into your chest while tucking your hips up into the air, then extend back out to your push-up position. Try not to go too fast and keep your moves slow and controlled. Isolate and feel the burn!

**CARDIOVASCULAR WORKOUTS** - It's not about the duration, but more importantly the intensity. Interval training is your answer here. Try sprinting for 45 seconds then rest for one minute. Repeat ten times. I also incorporate track workouts into my routine and the results are amazing. Track workouts consist of various sprinting exercises as well as plyometric squat jumps. On average a track workout should take you no more than 40 minutes. Any longer and you run the risk of losing muscle. Too much cardio is not always the right answer.

**DIET** - No matter how much you exercise, if you don't monitor your food intake you just won't get results. It's that simple! I recommend eating between five and six meals a day depending on your height and weight. Keep your carbohydrates simple, for example, basmati rice, sweet potato, oats and rice cakes. Make sure you consume



protein with each meal, such as chicken, beef, fish and whey protein shakes. Keep sauces to a minimum and stay away from fried and oily foods. Don't forget to drink plenty of water throughout the day, at least two litres. You should be eating every three hours in order to speed up your metabolism and this will help you stay lean.

Good luck,  
Rosa-Maria

## FOCUS

Dear Rosa,

I am a mother of four children and have competed in four major figure competitions. I was fortunate enough to better myself physically and mentally in each and every one of the competitions. I am now having a break from competing for the next twelve months. I will work on achieving my goal and becoming number one for the Australian titles. I was wondering how you keep your vision alive and your body so conditioned for such a long period of time.

Jodie Casey,  
NSW

## NEVER FORGET WHAT YOU WANT AND DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO GET THERE.

Hi Jodie!

First of all congratulations! You look sensational in your photos and I'm so proud of you. Well done! Having some time off is not such a bad thing and may do you the world of good. It sounds as though you have been really busy dieting and competing in all of 2007.

As a pro figure athlete I find that these days I am pretty much dieting all year round for shows, photo shoots and expos and this can be quite taxing on the body. I remember back in 2003 and 2004, I competed in only two shows for the year and

Figure Athlete Jodie Casey



I was a little more relaxed! But I am not complaining. I love what I do and enjoy being onstage.

It is good you have a plan and are focused on becoming number one in the Australian titles. Never forget what you want and

do whatever it takes to get there. I know you have a strong mind and are a dedicated athlete so keep doing what you are doing and, as I say to all my girls, 'Go for Gold!'. Train hard in the off-season and I promise the results will come.



*I tend to eat reasonably clean all year round but if I am not competing or doing photo shoots, I won't hesitate in having some down time. It's okay to enjoy the naughty foods. My husband and I enjoy going to Starbucks every now and then! It is impossible to stay in contest shape all year round. Not only is it unhealthy, it will eventually take its toll and you run the risk of burning out. I would suggest eating clean throughout the week with a free day or two over the weekend. You will find that it is possible to stay in great shape by monitoring your cardio, weight training and diet.*

*Hope this helps, Jodie, and please do keep me posted with your plans for next year.*

*Good luck,  
Rosa-Maria*

## **CARDIO TIMING**

**Dear Rosa,**

*When is it best to do cardio? Before or after training and why? My current goal is to lose weight.*

*Maree,  
QLD*

*Hi Maree,*

*It has been proven that weight training actually burns more fat than cardio! After your weight sessions you will find you have an increased metabolic rate that lasts a few hours. On the other hand, as soon as you finish doing cardio your metabolic rate goes back to normal. If your main goal is to lose weight then a combination of both is ideal. When I am dieting down for a contest I will start the day off with 30 to 45 minutes of cardio first thing in the morning on an empty stomach.*

*I will then have two to three meals before I head to the gym for my usual weight session which goes on for about 45 minutes. The only time I will do cardio after weights is if I have been unable to fit it in first thing in the morning.*

*On top of this I will add two track workouts a week to my programme incorporating a series of plyometric squats jumps. Don't forget your diet is equally important and should not be overlooked!*

*Keep fit,  
Rosa-Maria **M&F***

Rosa-Maria Romero

**IFBB PRO FIGURE COMPETITOR**

Cover Model, TV Presenter, Personal Trainer



3 x Australian National  
Body Shape Champion  
and World Grand Finalist



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