

SEPTEMBER 2015

THE FITNESS MAGAZINE

WHY YOU

NEED TO PRACTICE MOUNTAIN CLIMBING TODAY!

STOP FEELING GUILTY WHEN YOU NEED A BREAK!

11
BODY-ROCKING BOSU BALL EXERCISES

VIVA LAS VITAMINS

FITNESS ENTREPRENEUR
Maya Nassar
TAKING OVER THE MIDDLE EAST

TRX
EXERCISES TO SCULPT A STRONG UPPER BODY



Styles & Features

MAYA NASSAR

A certified sports nutritionist and personal trainer, her Start Living Right mission has inspired many people across the globe reach the best shape of their lives.

How and when did you discover your passion for fitness?

A few years ago, I had gained a lot of weight and had a very unhealthy lifestyle. I was very insecure about my body and was very unfit. This is what motivated me to change for the better. I realized that I am responsible for my own lifestyle and I did not want to be overweight or insecure. This is when I changed my eating habits, joined a gym, and as a result changed my life.

What encouraged you to compete in bikini fitness? Is the Middle East well represented in these competitions?

I started competing in 2013. I had lost all the weight gained and reached my goal, so I was looking for a new challenge. I wanted to take my fitness to the next level and compete against top fitness models. A friend of mind told me about a competition in London, and this is when I decided to go for it. I didn't win any trophies in 2013, but I won first place in 2014 and won more trophies in 2015. Unfortunately, these competitions are not well represented in the Middle East. They do not exist in Lebanon... I had to travel abroad to compete internationally.

Do you have any fitness inspirations? Which celebrity body do you admire the most?

A bodybuilder called Tom Venuto is my fitness inspiration. He wrote a book that inspired me to push to my limits, which totally changed my life. I think Shakira has a great body. I believe the best bodies are fit, healthy, and athletic.

What do you think about people who claim that their genetics are standing in their way of getting fit and losing weight?

I would say that this is incorrect. I personally have bad genetics but that is not an excuse not to get into shape. People with slow genetics will have to work harder than others, but they will learn the values of discipline, dedication, and determination. The only thing holding someone back from getting fit is their excuses or their unwillingness to try very hard.

How do you feel about 30-day squat challenge and similar intense workout programs?

I personally do not follow any fitness crazes. I believe someone should follow a proper fitness program that trains every muscle group in the body. Doing squats every day for 30 days will not produce the same results as someone who follows a well-designed weightlifting program.



Which do you prefer: split training or full body training and why?

I would say split routines, simply because it is a more advanced form of training. Split routines involve training a different muscle group on a different day, and this allows your workout to be more aggressive. The advantage of split training routines is to give individualized attention to each muscle group, enabling you to lift heavier and train that specific muscle harder.

Maya you recently launched a fitness app called Start Living Right that has been ranked number 1 many times. Tell us more about the app and how it is different than other apps.

I launched the first ever fitness mobile application in Lebanon, and it has been ranked number one by the Apple Store competing against other international applications. My app is different from others in that it is very personal and shares my story. My app is for anyone who is like my old self before I became fit. It is for anyone who is struggling to lose weight and does not know where to begin. I have included workout programs, healthy recipes, tons of advice, fat loss calculators, and much more to help people with their fitness goals. My app can be downloaded for free by searching for "startlivingright" from any smartphone store.

What do you think is the biggest fitness myth?

That lifting weights will make women look bulky or muscular. So many women do not lift weights because they think they will look like a bodybuilder. Women do not have enough testosterone in their body to become masculine and the only way they will become that way is if they take steroids. On the contrary, lifting weights will help women lose fat and shape their body.

For weight loss, if you could choose would you focus on cardio or weights?

I would say weights. This is because weightlifting builds up your metabolism, which helps you burn fat much quicker. Weightlifting also shapes your body and makes it appear more slim, firm, and toned. Research has proven that people who lift weights are more satisfied with their bodies than those who only do cardio. However, any ideal fitness program should include both weightlifting and cardio.

You previously mentioned your desire to empower people and women specifically by getting fit, how does this work?

This works because when someone reaches their fitness goals, it helps them reach

other goals in their life too. Being fit and healthy creates self-confidence, personal satisfaction, and happiness. Becoming healthy also teaches someone about goal-setting, dedication, discipline, and hard work. Finally, I believe a healthy body produces a healthy mind, which will help make people more produce.

Aside from fitness, which others sport do you enjoy?

I am a huge fan of horse riding. When I was younger, I used to compete in showjumping and was the junior champion of Lebanon in 2001. Other than that, I enjoy running, swimming, or any activity that keeps me physically active.

Who is your favorite athlete and why?

I am a fan of the tennis player Serena Williams. I like that she is a strong woman who empowers others.

What are your future ambitions?

My next big goal is to open a gym. I want to create a physical location that will change the lives of other people.

What will set your gym apart from others?

I want to build a full wellness center. It will include a gym, spa, beauty center, and on-site nutritionist. What will set my gym apart from others? It will be a motivational center that will support people from day one to achieve their goals. It will offer guidance, training, and nutritional plans and all the support someone needs.

