

# FIT BODIES

WOMEN WHO WORK OUT

## Belinda Benn

### When did you begin showing an athletic streak?

At the age of 37 when I took up surfing! I never did any sports due to childhood asthma. So I was shocked and amazed that I was athletic. Surfing was the first step that led to transforming my physique and my life. Since then I have done heaps of extreme sports – I love adrenalin!

### Beginnings in weight training:

I saw an online advertisement for a bikini model competition with the finals being held at the Olympia in Las Vegas. I was feeling adventurous and thought "why not"! I had no idea about the industry but I saw all these guys with pumped muscles and figured that's what I needed to be. I went on an insane weight training and diet program (that I made up by researching online) and transformed my physique within eight weeks for a photo shoot. I didn't get to the finals of the competition but those photos generated a huge amount of interest and led to bodybuilding.com using me in their 2009 advertisements in magazines such as Shape, Muscle and Fitness Hers and Oxygen.

### When did you decide to become a figure competitor?

I did my first competition last year after I started getting heaps of emails from girls asking about how to lean out and get ripped. I knew nothing about physique competitions but decided compete so I could appreciate what was required. It takes a lot of planning, dedication, discipline and hard work!

### How often do you train?

Ideally, I train weights for an hour, four times a week and do cardio for up to an hour, three to five days with one day of rest.

### Training Routine:

To keep seeing progress I have to mix things up a lot - one routine is never the same as the next, some of my key strategies are:

- Minimise rest periods between sets so my heart rate remains elevated
- Train to failure regularly
- Always incorporate dynamic free weight exercises (especially barbell squats, lunges with variations and step-ups)
- Constantly push myself harder to train the weaker areas

### How long do you diet before a competition?

From start to finish - three months.

### Do you take any supplements?

Whey protein powder, BCAAs, creatine and sometimes glutamine post-training when I am leaning out.

### Typically daily diet:

Everyday I get tons of emails asking about my diet. So I decided to write "Get Lean Program" ([www.getleanprogram.com](http://www.getleanprogram.com)). Here is an example of a typical day's food:

**Breakfast:** Steel Cut Oats with cinnamon, dried cranberries, sunflower seeds and flax seed.

**Snack:** Low-fat unsweetened yogurt, pear and 1/3 cup of almonds

**Lunch:** Chicken breast with salad and sweet potato

**Snack:** Protein shake with banana, flax seed and cinnamon

**Dinner:** Beef with salad

**Snack:** Half serve of whey protein shake

### Diet weaknesses:

Of course! Aussie red wine and rum and raisin ice-cream!



## Belinda Benn

**Birth Date**.....26 March 1964

**Birth Place**.....Adelaide, Australia

**Current Residence**....Panama, Central America

**Height**.....171cm

**Off-season Weight**.....60kg

**Competition Weight**...54kg

### Best body part:

I am most proud of my butt. Living in Latin America, it's the land of the Latina beauty and they know how to shake their booty like there is no tomorrow - all shapes and sizes! And it's not unusual for girls to train just their butt at the gym. So there is plenty of inspiration around to get busy with squats, lunges, hamstring curls and kickbacks!

### Motivation for training:

At 37, I had zero fitness - so my motivation was to get fit so I could learn to surf. Later my motivation for weight-training came from seeing how great other girls (and guys) looked when they had muscle. I feel very blessed to be able to train like I do at my age - and that motivates me to give 110% every time I step in the gym. I also feel a responsibility to all the people that write to me and follow my progress, to keep inspiring them by staying focused and committed. I have only been weight-training seriously for two years - so the best has yet to come!

### Most rewarding experience:

The most rewarding thing is seeing other people transform their bodies because they have been inspired by my story and photos.

### Future goals:

My goal is to keep inspiring people! It doesn't matter how old you are or if you have never done any sport, you can start today! I hope to challenge old ways of thinking and prove that there are no barriers to achieving the physique you want.

### Favourite physiques:

**Timea Majorova:** Determined, good business head and timeless physique.

**Nicole Wilkins-Lee:** An incredible fitness and figure competitor - great example of how women can be very pretty and super strong!

**Rosa-Maria Romero:** A competition powerhouse blitzing the way for other Australia figure competitors overseas

**Erin Stern:** for her athletic abilities as well as an incredibly powerful physique (form and function)!

### What would MuscleMag readers be most surprised to know about you?

I started working as a professional classical double bass player at the age of 15. I toured Europe, with the Australian Youth Orchestra, and Australia, with the Adelaide Chamber Orchestra.

### You in 10 years:

In 10 years I would like to look back and feel like I made every day count. I would like to have my own business that allows me to work anywhere in the world.

### Thoughts on weight training:

I believe there is absolutely no better way to reach the aesthetic potential of your physique. Weight training enables you to specifically target every muscle and develop it to obtain perfect symmetry and form. It's very precise. Everyone can benefit from weight training, no matter what age or level. Professional athletes cross train with weights, while retired people use them to improve their quality of life. There are not many sports you can say that about!

### Is there anyone you would like to acknowledge?

I would like to thank all the people from Australia who have emailed me with kind words and encouragement, it means a lot! Also, a special thank you to my trainer from Columbia, Evelio Gomez Hernandez, and of course my family.



*Belinda Benn*  
be strong / stay young

Images courtesy of Belinda Benn

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