Why strong is the new skinny (and how to be both)

#fitspo goals
When you start reaching for your Adidas Superstars in situations that would normally call for a Valentino Rockstud, you know change is afoot

Blame it on the enduring athleisure trend, the seemingly universal preference for kombucha over prosecco or that ubiquitous #fitspo hashtag, but the message is loud and clear: fashion has fallen for fitness. Gigi Hadid is the global pin-up for a healthy body and when Jesinta Campbell strode down the runway for the David Jones spring/summer ’15 launch with those abs, it was the final nail in the coffin (at least as far as Australian women are concerned) for aspiring to be skinny.

But of course, the trend goes beyond aesthetics. The research shows that strength - in terms of both muscle and bone density - is crucial for men and women’s wellbeing and long-term health. Who better to show us how to get there than master personal trainer (and the official PT for IMG Models, no less), Ricardo Riskalla of RawFit. Here, he shares his tips for being strong and skinny.

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Why is it so important to not just be skinny, but strong as well?
I believe it’s important to be skinny and strong at the same time. When I say strong I don’t mean muscly. I mean tight tissues and healthy skin. The right training is when you look at someone and they glow, not muscles popping up everywhere, but long limbs, great skin and hair, which is all the result of a great diet and great training.

Is it a healthier goal than simply trying to shed kilos?
I am not a believer in counting kilojoules. I promote eating nutrient-rich foods, loving yourself and paying attention to proper relaxed breathing and stress reduction. These are great targets to add value to anyone’s life.
What is the ideal physique your clients want right now?
The ideal body is a combination of looking healthy, not over-trained, with great skin and hair.

How do you suggest they get there?
My clients follow a nutrient-dense diet with lots of vegetables, fruit and great fats. That's the secret! The training involves a combination of dancing exercises, body weight exercises and a lot of secrets that I can’t reveal. I’ve created a special exercise app that anyone can use called A Million Workouts by Rawfit and most of my clients use it to do their homework.

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How many times a week do you suggest your clients work out?
As a general rule I suggest my clients exercise between three to six days a week. I always add days off depending on their stress levels. I take their stress levels very seriously. It’s important to be calm to make good decisions, to avoid over-eating and above all, to rest well.

Who do you think is the ultimate pin-up girl for the 'strong is the new skinny' trend?
I believe that my client, model Erin Shea, is the perfect girl at the moment. She’s the one to watch.

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